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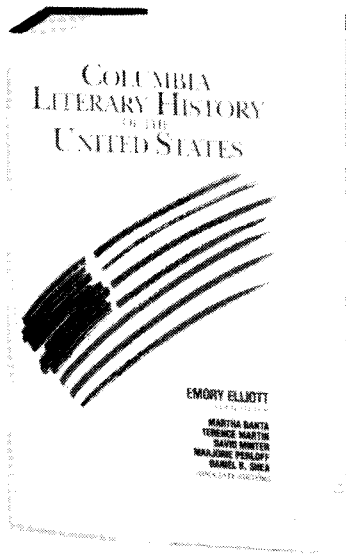

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Out of My Mind

SN-1987 A

JEREMY BERNSTEIN

On the evening of February 23, 1987, Albert Jones of Nelson, New Zealand, as was his custom, went out after dinner to the driveway near his home. In the driveway, he had set up a large astronomical telescope of his own construction. Jones, who is now sixty-seven, retired not long ago after working in the repair division of an automobile company in Nelson. But, since 1944, he has spent much of his free time as an amateur astronomer, studying "variable stars"—stars whose brightness varies in the course of time. It is estimated that he has made about 350,000 variable star observations. He has been called the world's greatest amateur observational astronomer, and, in the summer of 1987, he was awarded the Order of the British Empire for his work. On February 23, he began his star scan by examining a relatively nearby galaxy known as the Large Magellanic Cloud, which, at about nine-thirty local time (the time he was looking at it), was quite high in the sky. He noticed nothing unusual.

In view of what was about to happen, it is instructive to quantify Jones's non-observation. His home-constructed telescope is what is known as a 12.5-inch "Newtonian reflector." This means that in essence it is a long tube into which light enters, where it is then collected and focused by a mirror—in this case, 12.5 inches in diameter. The mirror is one of the few things Jones actually bought that was designed for a telescope. The light is reflected out the side of the telescope by a second mirror and can be examined through an eyepiece. In Jones's case, the eyepiece was a Second World War bombsight. The telescope was powerful enough to detect stars up to what astronomers call the +13.5 magnitude. Astronomers have traditionally utilized a magnitude scale that, perversely, is adjusted so that the larger the number, the *weaker* the apparent brightness. Negative numbers are assigned to strong sources. Thus on a logarithmic scale the Sun has an apparent magnitude of −26.6, the Moon −12.6, and the planet Venus, at its brightest, −4.4. Jones could have detected any peculiar star with a magnitude less than +7.5, and he saw none in the Large Magellanic Cloud that evening.

The next morning, as he often did, Jones set his alarm clock for a pre-dawn hour so that he could continue his observations. By this time, the Large Magellanic Cloud was setting, and, as he already had studied it that evening, he passed it by. This, as it turned out, was a pity. If someone had continued to watch for an hour or so after Jones had turned his attention elsewhere, they would have seen the most spectacular astronomical event to occur in our vicinity in the last 383 years. The unprepossessing blue star Sk-69° 202, so designated in a catalog by Nicholas Sanduleak of Case Western Reserve University, had suddenly become a supernova—SN-1987 A—so bright that it would have been visible with the naked eye. While many supernovas are observed each year, this was the first one in nearly four centuries seen to explode in our own or a neighboring galaxy.

The next evening Jones was back at his telescope. Now, to sort out the sequence of events, it is useful to describe things in what astronomers call "Universal Time." (This is also known as Greenwich mean time.) The advantage of doing so is that the effect of the longitude gets subtracted out, and one can see at a glance what event is earlier and what is later. In these units, Jones's initial non-observation was recorded at 9:22 UT (Universal Time) on February 23. It was now 8:52 UT the following evening. When Jones pointed his telescope at the Large Magellanic Cloud, the

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JEREMY BERNSTEIN's forthcoming book *Kinetic Theory in the Expanding Universe* is a technical monograph.

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supernova, in his words, "popped out" at him. By this time it was +4.4 magnitude, which is to say, it was as bright as a star visible to the naked eye. He at once called Frank Bateson in nearby Touranga.

Bateson has been, for sixty years, the director of the Variable Star Section of the Royal Astronomical Society of New Zealand. Jones said to Bateson, "Frank, there is a star in the Large Magellanic Cloud where there was no star before." Bateson would have telexed this remarkable news to the International Astronomical Union in the United States, but, as it happens, no commercial telexes can be sent from New Zealand at night. He did, however, get word immediately by telephone to astronomers in Australia. Meanwhile, a Canadian observer—a professional astronomer, Ian Shelton of the University of Toronto, working at the Las Campanas station in Chile—happened to develop a photographic plate at 5:31 UT, some three and a half hours earlier. The photographic plate was of the Large Magellanic Cloud, and in it was an image of what appeared to be a very bright star. At first Shelton thought it was a flaw in the plate. He went outside to look and, sure enough, the new supernova was visible to the naked eye. Thus Shelton became the second person to discover SN-1987 A, with Jones a close third.

The first person actually to see the supernova, an hour and a half earlier, was another Las Campanas observer named Oscar Duhelde, who did not tell anyone until Shelton brought the matter up. Because Jones did not see the supernova the night before, he was able to narrow down the instant of the explosion. Unknown to anyone at the time, remnants of the supernova first made their appearance here at 7:35:41 UT on February 23, nearly two hours prior to Jones's non-observation. These remnants were in the form of ghostly, elusive particles called neutrinos.

At the Fairport mine in Painesville, Ohio, some twenty miles from Cleveland, miners and other employees of the Morton Salt Company—"When it rains, it pours"—tend to wear patches on their overalls and miner's helmets that read "Think Snow!" This is not because these people have an affinity to skiing. Rather, it is because they mine rock salt, which is sprinkled on icy roads—when it pours, they reign. The Fairport mine is very much a working commercial mine. Visiting it is a serious matter. The increasingly uneasy visitor is given a safety lecture that includes an interlude on using a rather heavy catalytic converter worn on a thick leather belt at all times when one is underground. The converter transforms, in the case of a mine fire, carbon monoxide, which is poisonous, into carbon dioxide, which isn't. It also gets very hot when it is working and, one is told, despite that, one had better keep it in one's mouth in order to survive. One is then given a pair of high-top shoes with iron toes (in case one trips on some lumps of salt), a pair of blue coveralls, and a hard plastic helmet with a miner's lamp attached to it. One is then ready to go underground.

The mine shaft is two thousand feet deep—nearly two Empire State buildings down. There are two elevators that connect the bottom to the surface: a freight elevator—a sort of bucket—that brings up the salt and can be used in emergencies for people, and a passenger elevator that is big enough to hold ten miners on each of its decks (about forty at a time are at work in the mine) and, if necessary, various kinds of material. It is a comfortable, if austere, steel cage.

The ride down takes about four minutes and feels, to a newcomer, as if it takes an eternity. The temperature increases as one goes down. The walls of the working face of the mine are at a temperature of about eighty-five degrees Fahrenheit. There is a good deal of humidity at the bottom of the shaft. Murky tunnels seem to lead in all directions. One passes a huge noisy fan and is led down a dark tunnel, with one's miner's lamp illuminating the way. One has to be careful not to slip on the humid salt. After walking for what seems like another small eternity, one is confronted by what looks like an impassable steel wall. There are warning signs about electrical equipment, but with a proper key the iron barrier can be opened and passed. At first, one is startled by the bright sodium vapor lights and the air-conditioning. One is in another world, the world of a high-energy physics laboratory.

The laboratory is devoted to a single enterprise: the care and feeding of an entity known as the "IMB detector." The initials *IMB* stand for Irvine, Michigan, and Brookhaven—that is, the University of California at Irvine, the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, and the Brookhaven National Laboratory at Upton, Long Island, New York. These three institutions built the detector and maintain and run

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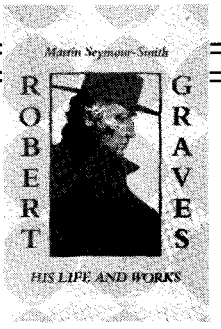

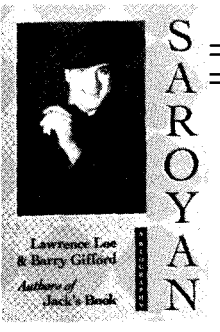

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it. What is the detector? In November of 1979, work was started on the currently occupied chamber, which is separate from the rest of the mining operation (though close enough that blasting can be felt in it), and the evacuation was completed on August 20, 1980. It has been partitioned into four separate areas.

As one enters the chamber, one passes through a large room filled with what looks like, and is, a very complex water filtration system (the reason for which will become evident shortly). In the next room, there is a kind of laboratory bench area with, among other things, a microwave oven suitable for making coffee. In the next area there is a maze of computer equipment, and, finally, one comes to the heart and soul of the detector: a gigantic pool of translucent and highly purified water. The tank is rectangular in shape: sixty feet wide by eighty feet long. It is sixty-five feet deep and holds a total of eight thousand metric tons of water. The water is so clear that, when the divers from the University of Michigan who service the tank about every three weeks first went into it, they got vertigo. It was like falling through thin air. Looking into this water, one sees an array of 2,048 photo-multiplier tubes. These very large—eight inches in diameter—hemispherical tubes were recently developed for this kind of detection of weak light signals. Each one costs about a thousand dollars. A couple of them probably cost about as much as Mr. Jones's entire telescope.

As one might gather from the name, the purpose of the photo-multiplier tubes is to detect light. Therein lies a tale. The light (more generally, electromagnetic radiation) to be detected is emitted by rapidly moving electrons. If the electrons are moving more rapidly than the effective speed of light in water—nothing can move more rapidly than the speed of light in a vacuum, but a material medium slows the light up—then they can emit a form of radiation known as "Čerenkov radiation," named after the Russian scientist Pavel Aleksejevic Čerenkov, who shared the 1958 Nobel Prize in physics for proposing it. This radiation is emitted in a narrow cone—something like a sonic boom—with its axis in the direction of the electron's motion, a detail that is crucial to using it in a detector. By detecting the Čerenkov radiation, it is possible to reconstruct the trajectory of the particle that emitted it—in this case, an electron.

The electrons that the detector was built to detect had, in the first instance, nothing to do with supernovas. In the middle of the 1970s, several theoretical physicists proposed theories that unified previously disparate parts of elementary particle physics (of this, more later). An inevitable consequence of this unification program, it appeared, was that matter had to be somewhat unstable. The proton, which had usually been taken as the stable building block of matter, would, it was thought, actually decay but with a very long lifetime—some 10^{31} years, much longer than the age of the universe, which is about 10^{10} years. As a result, not very many protons in an average sample of matter were predicted to decay in, say, a year.

Most of the theories predicted a proton decay mode in which a very energetic positive electron would be emitted. Hence one needed a detector that could detect a very rare event involving the emission of the very energetic electron by a decaying proton—ergo, the tank. The 8,000 tons of water in the tank contain about 2×10^{33} protons. If each proton lived even as long as 10^{31} years, in such a mass of protons there could still be about two hundred decays in a year—an event every couple of days, or enough to work with.

Now, one may well ask, once one sees the reason to build the tank, why do so in a mine chamber two thousand feet below the surface of the earth—a mine chamber that, incidentally, cost $200,000 to dig? (The physicists got a very good price because Morton Salt wanted to try out a new piece of digging equipment.) The reason for the mine chamber is what the physicists call "background." The earth's atmosphere is constantly bombarded by cosmic rays, and these can produce energetic positive electrons that can look just like the ones from proton decay. The mine shaft is located under two thousand feet of absorber, which screens out most of the background. The odd neutrino does get through but only produces events that mock up what one is looking for every two or three years. The proposal to dig the tunnel was supported financially by the Department of Energy in 1979, and the digging was completed in the summer of 1980. The tank was filled completely with ultra-pure water by July 30, 1982, and the experimenters began to wait for proton decay events. They are still waiting. In the words of Maurice Goldhaber, one of the senior experimenters

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from Brookhaven, "We had some candidates, but they weren't elected." At this writing, the conclusion is that the proton must live at least 3.5×10^{32} years—a disappointingly long time for some of the theorists who championed simple models of unification that predicted shorter times.

In order to understand what happened on February 23, we must return once again to the tank. Occasionally, very occasionally, high energy neutrinos that course through the tank because of cosmic ray phenomena hit one of the electrons in the water molecules that make up the content of the tank and knock it for a loop. Neutrinos can also interact with protons and produce positive electrons—positrons. The velocity of light in water is about three-quarters of the velocity of light in a vacuum, which is, in turn, about three hundred million meters a second. If the electron recoils from its collision with the neutrino with enough energy so as to be moving faster than the velocity of light in water, which is about 70 percent of its speed in a vacuum, it will "Čerenkov radiate." The greater its energy, the more intense will be this radiation, and if it has enough energy, it will trigger enough of the 2,048 photo-multiplier tubes to be detectable. The signals from these tubes are carried over wires into the neighboring room, where they are fed into computers that make a preliminary analysis of them. This process takes place automatically and goes on night and day, so long as the detector is in service, whether or not anyone is actually down in the mine to observe it.

It was going on during the early hours, Cleveland time, of the morning of February 23, which happened to be a Monday. That is why no one was there to notice that a power supply had tripped off, shutting down a quarter of the phototubes. In the meantime, it was late in the afternoon in Kamioka, Japan, where there is another detector—the Kamiokanda II, a modified version of the IMB, in a zinc mine—this one with a tank of 3,000 tons of water, but with phototubes that cover a larger fraction of the surface, meaning that electrons, and hence neutrinos, of lower energy can be detected. At precisely 7:35:35 UT—within an error of fifty milliseconds—both detectors recorded bursts of energetic neutrinos. The Kamiokanda II detector recorded eleven neutrinos in 12.439 seconds while the IMB detector recorded eight in 5.59 seconds.

One should understand that all of this was realized only several days after the fact. That it was realized at all is a tribute to the interplay between theory and experiment. In the first place, over the past two decades a picture has evolved of how a supernova develops. For a star to become a supernova, it must be more massive than what is known as the "Chandrasekhar limit"—after the Indian-born American astrophysicist Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar who won the 1983 Nobel Prize in physics for this and other fundamental contributions to theoretical astronomy. The "classical" Chandrasekhar limit is 1.456 times the mass of the Sun, but subtle corrections can make it as low as about 1.2 times the mass of the Sun or as high as about 2 times the mass of the Sun. Fortunately for us, or our descendants, it is always larger than the mass of the Sun, because a star that has a mass that exceeds this limit at the end of its evolution is doomed to collapse and, in the case of a supernova, to explode. Before the explosion, such a star consists of a dense iron core—iron because the fusion reactions that power a star cannot produce elements heavier than iron—surrounded by onion skins of lighter elements, typically, moving outwards, silicon, oxygen, carbon, helium, and hydrogen. Once the iron core becomes sufficiently massive and sufficiently hot, it simply collapses in a fraction of a second—milliseconds.

At first, the outer layers do not know that the inner core has collapsed. Then they are hit by a stupendous shock wave. The final destination of the inner core is to become a neutron star—a crystalline mass of neutrons, denser than an atomic nucleus, weighing about the mass of the Sun, and only about ten kilometers across. To accomplish this, and still conserve energy, a mind-boggling amount of energy must be released—about 3×10^{53} ergs in about a second. To have some perspective on this number, note that the Sun (no mean radiator) emits energy at a rate of only 3.9×10^{33} ergs per second. The emission rate in supernova formation is, therefore, equivalent to 10^{20} Suns. The general belief of the scientists who study such matters is that most of this energy is released in the form of neutrinos, not in the first explosion but in the resultant shock wave. The supernova turns into a sort of neutrino star. These neutrinos, in the case of SN-1987 A, took about 163,000 years to reach our planet, where they arrived

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on February 23, some three hours before the associated visible light, also produced by the shock wave. About, it is thought, 10^{58} neutrinos were emitted in the explosion. About 30 million billion of these passed through the IMB detector in six seconds, of which eight made suitable collisions and were detected, though after the fact. Nothing in the IMB circuitry, as it was then (the software has since been modified) would have instantaneously signaled to an experimenter that such a neutrino burst had taken place. Now a computer readout will say, "Possible neutrino burst detected at time . . ." if there is one.

Both the IMB people and the physicists at the Kamiokanda II were alerted to the possibility that neutrino events could be found retrospectively in their data by the discovery of Duhelde, Shelton, and then Jones of visible supernova. As it happens, we were lucky to have found these neutrinos at all. The IMB, as I noted, had a power surge that shut off a quarter of its phototubes, while, as it turned out, the Kamiokanda II suffered a complete power outage on February 25, which made it impossible to make an absolute calibration of the time the neutrinos arrived there. It was, then, in this serendipitous way, that the subject of extra-galactic observational neutrino astronomy was founded.

The Gold of Asia

MARY EWALD

I awoke today with an itch to be on my way,
To cross to continents far where strange streams sing
And under trees bizarre gaudy birds caw and play,
For the alien charms, and freshness is everything.
I want to be off to ultima Thule, the blank spaces
On the map, and watch wide nature's wonders revealed
While testing human invention in far-off places,
Man's sameness and difference in foreign customs sealed.
I'd like to be with Stanley in Africa finding
Livingstone under a tree, or Burton, disguised,
Roaming forbidden Mecca, or Cortez winding
To Aztec altars, or Father Huc surprised
To gaze, after wading the windy ice of wild Asia,
On Lhasa, and hear its tinkling gold fantasia.

MARY EWALD is the author of *Weapons Against Chaos*, a book of poems.

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Confessions of a Low Roller

ARISTIDES

Ours has long been a distinguished publishing family, if you take the adjective "distinguished" in a loose sense and if you allow a definition of "publishing" broad enough to include bookmaking. I don't mean to brag about family lineage, but I had an uncle, dead some years now, who had fully two sobriquets: in some quarters he was known as Lefty and in others as Square Sam. All gamblers, it is often enough said, die broke, but my uncle, whom I scarcely knew, is reported to have left the planet with something on the order of twenty-five Ultrasuede jackets hanging in the closet of his home in Los Angeles. Beginning life as a professional gambler, he soon went into publishing (or bookmaking) and eventually owned a small piece of a large casino-hotel in Las Vegas. To place him for you socially, he was a man at whose granddaughter's wedding a guest was Frank Sinatra. Need I say more?

Although this uncle did not carry my family name, there was a prominent gambler who did. Some years ago I read a lengthy obituary in a Chicago newspaper about a man who carried my exact name, first and last, and who was described in the obit headline as "Gentleman Big-Time Bookie, Dies at 75." My namesake—or am I his?—turns out to have run, in the words of the obituarist, "a large betting layoff operation from offices [that covered] wagers that bookies across the nation could not handle." The obituarist continued: "Although his associates were more often coarse, devious, violent men, [he] had the reputation of a bookmaker who kept his word and was mild-mannered in the extreme. He was well-read, fancied himself as a Talmudic scholar and was clearly the intellectual bookie of his time." It gets better. It seems that this man bearing my name also served as a Professor Henry Higgins to a gangland moll named Virginia Hill, who came to Chicago from Alabama at seventeen, whose great and good friend, as *Time* magazine used to put it, he was, though she finally left him for Benjamin (Bugsy) Siegel. "A non-smoker," the obituary notes, "he remained in robust health almost until his death by taking long, daily walks through the city [of Chicago] from his hotel on Ohio St."

The gentleman big-time bookie bearing my name died in Chicago in 1976, a fact that fills me with double regret, first for his death, for he appeared to have been a decent sort, and second because I wish I had had the chance to meet and talk with him. It is not about the Talmud that I wish I could have talked with "the intellectual bookie of his time," but about shop—specifically, about gambling. No photograph appeared with his obituary, but I imagine him to be a smallish man, silver-haired, expensively yet not gaudily dressed, good shoes well shined, nails manicured. We might have walked along Michigan Boulevard together on a late, lightly breezy afternoon in May, past Tiffany and Cartier and Saks Fifth Avenue and Neiman Marcus, stopping off for an aperitif in the cool, wood-paneled Coq d'Or bar in the Drake Hotel. Seated at one of the small tables in the dark room where sound tends to be gently muffled, I would have encouraged him to recount anecdotes about noble behavior on the part of crooks, in exchange for which I would have supplied him with anecdotes about what crooks academics can be. We should, I do not doubt, have addressed each other as "Mister," with the charm of adding to it our self-same last name.

If the mood were right, perhaps our talk might have ascended to philosophy, always within the confines of shop, of course. Why do men gamble? I might have asked him. Is gambling in the end always a ruinous diver-

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sion? Is there something masochistic about it? Was Malraux right when he called it, in connection with his character Clappique in *Man's Fate*, "suicide without death"? Is gambling not a metaphor but a metaphorical activity, since, as has been noted, life itself goes off at something like 6-5 against, though some think these odds unduly generous? Why does gambling excite, exhilarate, and depress some people while not arousing the least interest in others? What does gambling do for those people who go in for it in a big way? For those who enjoy it only occasionally? And, while I am at it, I might just have lowered the tone of the conversation and inquired if I was a chump to agree to an arrangement whereby I would have to pay 10 percent juice, or vigorish, on a $300 bet on this past year's World Series.

Consider, please, that figure $300, or $330 if I lost. Something rather hopeless about those numbers, if you ask me, something neither here nor there. I had originally intended to bet $1,000 ("a grand," in the grand old term), which is a good deal more than I have ever bet on anything, and then I decided that $500 was sufficient. But when I reached an old friend who has a bookie—I bet much too infrequently to have my own publisher—I heard myself say $300. I don't mean to suggest that $300 is a negligible sum; if one is down and out, it is a most impressive sum. I am sure that someone reading this is ready to inform me, in a properly moral tone, that a family of four could eat for a month on $300. Nowadays, though, there are restaurants in New York where one has to cut corners—go for the California wine instead of the French—to get a full dinner for two for less than $300. I myself consider it immoral to dine in such places. "It is all," as Albert Einstein must at some time have said to Max Planck, "relative."

If all this sounds a little goofy, it is merely because it is. No activity has been more rationalized than gambling—odds figured, probabilities worked out, point spreads meticulously established—and no activity, surely, is finally more irrational. In this essentially irrational activity, the first item that must be fixed, and with some precision, is the stake. Above all, it cannot be too little; it must be enough to stimulate whatever those spiritual glands are that gambling calls into action. The punishment must fit the crime; the agony of losing must be roughly equivalent to the ecstasy of winning. In this sense, it becomes clear that no bet can ever be too large; and herein lies the madness inherent in gambling, for the more you have, the more you need to risk.

"Important money" is what professional gamblers used to call big bets, and such fabled gamblers as Pittsburgh Phil (a horseplayer), Nick the Greek (cards and dice), and Ray Ryan (gin rummy) never played for unimportant money. Nick the Greek, whose last name was Dandolos, claimed once to have bet $280,000 on a five coming up before a seven in a crap game. The same Mr. Dandolos is said to have lost $900,000 in a single night in New York on the eve of a holiday trip to Europe, which—surprise! surprise!—had to be canceled. Winning a bet, Nick Dandolos used to say, is man's greatest pleasure; the second greatest pleasure, he claimed, is losing a bet. In more than fifty years of serious gambling, something on the order of $50,000,000 is supposed to have trafficked in and out of his hands. Yet Nick the Greek was no money snob. The late Jimmy Cannon, the sportswriter, told the story of the Greek's playing twenty-four hours straight at Arnold Rothstein's crap table and, after the crap game broke up, sitting down to play casino for twenty-five cents a hand with one of Rothstein's stickmen. "Action is all he wants," Cannon concluded, "and he has lasted longer than any of them and held on to his dignity."

Some gamblers get a thrill out of the action itself, while others need to be in action at high prices. The greater the stakes, the greater the pressure, the greater the cool (or courage) required. Damon Runyon, a gambler all his life and a student of gamblers, maintained he knew "men who will beat far better card players at gin [rummy] if the stakes are high enough just on simple courage." A gambler is like an airplane in that at a certain altitude—for the gambler, at certain high sums—the controls start to shake. I earlier mentioned certain "spiritual glands" that needed to be stimulated by gambling, but anatomical ones are often also called into play, producing sweaty hands, dry mouth, inconvenient loss of the control of facial muscles. No, nothing quite relaxes a fella like an evening of gambling.

Growing up in Chicago, I had a friend whose father was reputed to have bet $100,000 on a baseball game—and lost. This was during the early 1940s, when $100,000 was extremely important money and not the

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annual salary of a utility infielder or a Marxist professor of English at Duke University. Inconveniently, my friend's father didn't have the money; conveniently, there was a war on. As the story goes, he showed up the next afternoon at the bookie's with a smile and in a set of U.S. Navy bell-bottoms, having enlisted that morning. The uniform, supposedly, saved his life, for no one was about to kill a man in uniform during wartime, and he was able to arrange terms to pay off his debt.

What made him bet such a sum? He was living in Los Angeles at the time—always a hot gambling town, according to Damon Runyon—and must have waked one sunny weekday morning (I always imagine it to be a Tuesday) in an impatient mood. A voice within must have whispered, "Let 'er rip!" He did, and it nearly tore him in two. Almost all baseball games were played during the day at that time, so he must have known not much later than 2:30 P.M. Los Angeles time that he had made a serious mistake. I am pleased not to have been the one to serve him that evening's dinner, or to have to ask him if the lamb was properly underdone.

He died before I knew him, whether of heart attack, cancer, or stroke I cannot recall, but he couldn't have been more than in his early fifties. His wife and only son lived on after him in what I think of not as shabby gentility but elegant shabbility. They lived in a small one-bedroom apartment in a building with a doorman on a once posh but now fading Chicago street. Wife and son spoke of him with affection and awe, and in one corner of the small apartment were framed glossy signed photographs taken of him in the company of famous Jewish comedians and Italian singers—or was it Italian comedians and Jewish singers? Not a marathon man, he lived life at a sprint, going fast and dying young. Why is it that we look with wonder upon a man who one day bets a hundred thousand dollars on the outcome of a game and loses yet feel no wonder whatsoever looking upon a man who works a lifetime to stow away a few million?

My own interest in gambling—and now we return to someone never likely to have the mad courage to bet $100,000 or the powers of concentration to earn a million—initially derived from the social atmosphere in which I came of age. By this I certainly don't mean my home. My father had not the least interest in cards, sports, or gambling generally, preferring situations, such as the one he had inserted himself into as the owner of a small business, in which as far as possible he could control his own destiny. Most of the men in the rising middle-class Jewish milieu that I grew up in felt much the same. They were physicians and lawyers and businessmen and worked hard so that their children could have an easier life than they, as the sons of immigrants, had had. Some among them gambled—played a little gin rummy or in a small-stakes poker game, bet fifty dollars on a prizefight—but clearly work was at the center of their lives. They believed in personal industry, in thrift, in saving for the future. Entrepreneurial in spirit, they also believed that only a fool works for someone else.

On the periphery, though, were a small number of men who lived and believed otherwise. Two boys among my school friends and acquaintances had fathers who were bookies, and rather big-time ones, judging by the scale on which they lived. Nothing back of the candy store or Broadway cigar stand about them; they were rather like the rest of our fathers, but home more often and with better tans and more telephones in the house. They lived on the edge of the criminal world. So, too, I gather did the father of a girl I knew in high school; he played golf from April until October and from October until April played high-stakes gin rummy at a place atop the Sheraton Hotel called The Town Club; the younger brother of a Capone lieutenant, he was rumored to collect a dollar a month on every jukebox installed in Chicago. The brother of a man I once worked for when I was in high school was said to be a full-time gambler, making his living (he was a bachelor) betting on sports events. In his forties then, he carried the nickname "Acey"; if he is still alive, he would now be in his seventies, which is a bit old to carry around such a nickname. I would often see him at baseball games on weekday afternoons, where, well-groomed and well-rested, he looked as if his personal motto, an edited version of my father's and my friends' fathers', might read: "Only a fool works."

When young, I felt a strong attraction to such men. The attraction was to their seemingly effortless access to what I then took to be the higher and finer things of life. Their connection to corruption also excited me. Corruption was endemic to Chicago, a city that

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prided itself on its gangsters the way that other cities were proud of their artists, and one had to be brought up in a glass bubble—make that an isinglass bubble—not to come in contact with it. Dickens, Dostoyevsky, Dreiser, and many a novelist since knew that corruption is more alluring, and more convincingly described, than goodness. Goodness, on first acquaintance, is a bit boring—and, when young, the only thing duller than goodness is common sense.

I had an acquaintance whose father became a very rich man in a very brief time through selling very ugly aluminum awnings. One Saturday afternoon I went with him to his father's small factory, where, among his father and his father's salesmen, each with a high stack of bills in front of him, a serious poker game was in progress. My own father often used the phrase "place of business" with something of the same reverence that some reserve for the phrase "place of worship," and the idea of a poker game on the site of his business would have appalled him. At the time, it rather thrilled me. But then it would be many years until I came round to my father's view, which was essentially the view set out by Henry James in a youthful letter to his friend Charles Eliot Norton: "I have in my own fashion learned the lesson that life is effort, unremittingly repeated. . . . I feel somehow as if the real pity was for those who had been beguiled into the perilous delusion that it isn't."

So beguiled, I spent much of my adolescence in imitation of what I took to be the model of the gambler. During our last year of grammar school, my friends and I met for penny poker games on Saturday afternoons before ballroom dancing lessons. There we sat, at thirteen years old, neckties loosened, jackets draped over the backs of chairs, cigarettes depending unsteadily from the sides of our mouths, smoke causing our eyes to water and squint, playing seven-card stud, deuces usually wild. Quite a scene. Each of us must have thought himself some variant of George Raft, James Cagney, Humphrey Bogart, or John Garfield, when Leo Gorcey and the Dead End Kids gone middle-class was much more like it. "My pair of jacks see your three cents, Ronald, and I bump you a nickel."

A misspent youth? I suppose it was, though I never thought of it as such. Perhaps this was owing to its being so immensely enjoyable. In high school, gambling went from an occasional to an almost incessant activity. Although we never shot dice, my friends and I played every variation of poker, blackjack, and gin rummy. From city newsstand vendors we acquired and bet football parlay cards. Every so often, on weekend nights, we would travel out of the city to the sulky races, or "the trotters" as we called them, at Maywood Park. Some unrecognized genius invented a game called "pot-luck," a combination of blackjack and in-between, which guaranteed that, no matter how minimal the stakes to begin with, one would soon be playing for more than one could afford. With its built-in escalation element, pot-luck was a game that produced high excitement, for it was not unusual for someone to walk away from these games a two-hundred-dollar winner. I won my share, but more vividly than any win do I remember one gray wintry afternoon when, between four and six o'clock, I lost $125—this at a time when that figure might pay a month's rent on a two-bedroom apartment in a respectable middle-class neighborhood. If the end of the world had been announced on that evening's news, I, at seventeen, shouldn't in the least have minded. In fact, as I recall, I felt it already had.

Gambling, though scarcely a valuable education in itself, did teach a thing or two about one's own nature. I learned about the limits of my courage with money, for one thing; for another, I learned that, in gambling, as in life, you could figure the odds, the probabilities, the little and large likelihoods, and still, when lightning struck in the form of ill luck, logic was no help. I learned I had to put a good, and insofar as possible stylish, face on defeat, even though losing was very far from my idea of a nice time. If you were even mildly attentive, gambling revealed your character to you, showed it in operation under pressure, often taught you the worst about yourself. Some people wanted to win too sorely; they whined and moaned, banged the table and cursed the gods when they lost and seemed smug and self-justified in victory. Others sat grim and humorless over their cards, gloomy in defeat and always ready to settle for a small win. Still others exhibited, even at sixteen or seventeen, a certain largeness of spirit; they were ready to trust their luck; they had a feeling for the game, which I took to be a feeling for life itself, and were delighted to be in action.

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"In action" is an old gambler's phrase; and "the action" used to refer to gambling generally. Yet, for all its insistence on action, gambling can be excruciatingly boring. During one stretch in the army, I played poker at Fort Chaffee, in Arkansas, almost nightly for roughly six weeks; I played less for the excitement of gambling than to combat the boredom of army life when one is confined to a post. It turned out to be boredom pitted against boredom. In a rather low-stakes game over this period I emerged roughly a four-hundred-dollar winner. Some of this money I sent to a friend to buy me books in Chicago. The rest I spent on a steak and champagne dinner in the town of Fort Smith, Arkansas, for eight or nine barracks mates. Doing this seemed to me at the time a gesture of magnificence befitting a gambling man.

I remember this especially because it is the only use to which I can ever remember putting any money that I have won gambling. I cannot otherwise recall buying with gambling winnings a sweater, a shirt, a sock, a Q-tip. Such money has had a way of disappearing from me. Poof: not very easily come, altogether mysteriously gone. Which reminds me that gambling has never, for me, been primarily about money. I was fortunate, of course, in never having to gamble with money intended for rent or food, thereby, as a character in Pushkin's gambling story "Queen of Spades" puts it, risking "the necessary to win the superfluous." When the money wasn't there—when I was a young husband and father with no extra "tease," as the old horseplayers used to call money—I was easily enough able to refrain from gambling, which strengthens me in my cherished belief that as a gambler I am merely a dreamer and a fool and not an addict.

Gambling addicts are not on the whole an elegant sight. The crowds one encounters at a Nevada casino or at a sulky track on a wintry Wednesday night are quite as depressing as those at a national meeting of the Modern Language Association. Many years ago, in an effort to turn up a bit of tease without actually having to gamble for it, I wrote a piece of journalism on an outfit known as Gamblers Anonymous, which operates on the same principles—confession and comradeship in crisis—as Alcoholics Anonymous. At these meetings one hears an *Iliad* of woe, with enough material left over for an *Odyssey* of misery and an *Aeneid* of heartbreak: story after story of disappointed children, weeping wives, broken bones accompanying unpaid debts, busted-up homes destroyed by busted-out gamblers. On view here is the other side of gambling, the creepy and crummy side, where one hears a man recount how one morning, when his wife is out at the beauty shop, he sells off all the family furniture to get the money to support his hot hunches at the track that afternoon ("I figured I'd buy all new furniture with my winnings," he reports, "a nice surprise for the wife"), hunches that of course didn't work out; another man recounts how he broke into his son's silver dollar piggy bank for action money, then says nothing when his wife accuses his young son's best friend of taking the money; a man . . . but you get the general idea.

A more particular idea that attendance at these Gamblers Anonymous meetings conveys is the power that gambling can exert over those hooked on it. In its thrall, all other appetites tend to diminish. While one is gambling, food is of no interest, nor is alcohol. Gambling can also throw off one's interior clock, and while at it one is capable of prodigious wakefulness, so that, within limits, gambling can be said to triumph over time and fatigue. When serious gambling is going on, sex seems quite beside the point. At the compulsive level, gambling is all-consuming, and while it doesn't, like drugs or alcohol, fog the mind, it generally monopolizes it. When winning at gambling, one is in the country of the blue; when losing, the world seems mean and red and utterly hopeless. Gambling, one is either flying or crawling, elated or degraded. If any gambler was ever able to find the golden mean, he would probably bet it on the six horse in the fourth race at Pimlico.

As an activity that issues only in extreme states, gambling is of course a great Russian subject. Russians have gone in for gambling in a big way, both actually and literarily. Pushkin turned a card or two in his time, and his story "Queen of Spades" gives ample evidence of his knowing at firsthand the desolation of a resounding defeat at the tables. The dissipated young Count Leo Tolstoy was passionate about cards, though not very good at them, even though he devised a system that he set down on paper under the title "Rules for Card-Playing"; like many another such system, it plunged its creator into great debt. A three-thousand-ruble loss forced Tolstoy to

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put himself on a ten-ruble-a-month budget. After suffering gambling losses, the young count would proceed to flog himself—in his diary, of course. When his debts grew too great, he could always sell off a meadow or forest or horses from his estate. This is the stuff out of which nineteenth-century Russian novels are made. Tolstoy didn't simply make it all up.

Nor did Dostoyevsky, whose gambling problem ran deeper than Tolstoy's if only because he, not being an aristocrat, had no estate to sell off to clear his debts. Unlike Tolstoy, too, Dostoyevsky's gambling was not a form of dissipation. He gambled for the most commonsensical of reasons: he needed the money. The problem is that gambling—especially roulette, which was Dostoyevsky's game—may be the quickest but is clearly not the most efficient way of obtaining it. According to Joseph Frank, in his splendid biography of Dostoyevsky, the novelist was unfortunate in winning 11,000 francs in his first attempt at gambling. The hook was in. Yet Dostoyevsky, again according to Professor Frank, was not a pathological gambler but a fitful and sporadic one. He did suffer the inability that gamblers share with gluttons—that of not knowing when to leave the table. After each of his inevitably disastrous gambling episodes, Joseph Frank reports, "Dostoyevsky always returned to his writing desk with renewed vigor and a strong sense of deliverance." Dostoyevsky's losses, then, turned out to be world literature's gain. Fate sometimes uses a strange accounting system.

A highly superstitious man, ever on the lookout for omens and portents, Dostoyevsky had a theory about how to win at gambling that was utterly opposed to his own nature. Dostoyevsky's theory, or system, or secret called for mastery of the emotions while in action. "This secret," Dostoyevsky writes in a letter, "I really know it; it's terribly stupid and simple and consists in holding oneself in at every moment and not to get excited, no matter what the play. And that's all; it's then absolutely impossible to lose, and one is sure of winning." Tolstoy's system, too, called for control of the emotions and moderation—precisely the two things Tolstoy himself was incapable of achieving. "Those who are indifferent are those who are rewarded," wrote Jack Richardson, formulating this view in a single, short, well-made sentence in *Memoir of a Gambler*, his elegant, amusing, and profound book that itself sadly came up snake-eyes, double-zero, and busto in the casino of American publishing when it first appeared in 1979. Richardson's view, like those of Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy, assumes that the gods who watch over gambling are themselves not indifferent or are likely to be fooled by men pretending to a coolness it is not theirs to control. That either assumption is correct is, at best, 9-2 against.

If gambling seems an activity well suited to the Russian temperament with its taste for provoking fate, it is, even though illegal in forty-eight of America's fifty states, very far from un-American. To have come to America in the first place was to take a serious gamble. To advance with the country's frontier was another gamble. When one says that Americans like to gamble, one is of course really saying that the people who have come to America like to gamble. Whenever I have been in a casino, I have noted what seemed to me a high percentage of Asians, most of them Chinese. Jimmy Cannon recalls the older Irishmen in Greenwich Village, where he grew up, disapproving of gambling unless a man was single. Blacks were big for the numbers game and are now, I observe, heavy players in state lotteries. Jews and Italians grow up in gambling cultures—or at least they did when I was a boy—and some among them cross to the other side of the table, becoming bookies or casino owners, donning the expressionless face and the Ultrasuede jacket, like my deceased uncle, squarest of Sams. Texans, to touch on what is almost another ethnic group, have been known to be most earnest about poker played for heart-attack stakes. All of these are what are known as risky generalizations, subject to vehement exceptions: a friend who grew up in a Jewish working-class neighborhood, for example, informs me that in his youth a gambler was considered lower even than a Rumanian. Various anti-defamation leagues—Chinese, Black, Jewish, Italian, Irish, Texan, Rumanian—wishing to protest this paragraph may reach me at my office, care of the director, Center for Advanced Ethnic Insensitivity.

Men seem to go in for gambling more than women because, as boys, they often play games and thus early acquire the habits of competition. (Competition among women, even as young girls, is subtler, having to do

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with refinement, sophistication, beauty, and generally less blatant things than strength, agility, and speed.) Games that absorb one's energies in the playing of them do not require gambling for enjoyment. This is true of football, basketball, and baseball—on which men do often bet to get their competitive juices flowing after they are no longer able to play the games themselves—as well as tennis, running, and gymnastics. It isn't true of golf, which needs the stimulus of little side-bets to get one round the course, or billiards, every shot of which seems to cry out for a bet. Chess and bridge are games of sufficient intellectual intricacy to be played without gambling, even though I realize many people—Somerset Maugham among them—have played bridge for high stakes. Poker, blackjack, and gin rummy without money riding on the outcome are games suitable only for some knotty-pined recreation room in hell.

In bringing up boyhood with regard to gambling, I am, I fear, playing into the strong hand of the Freudians. This is a dangerous thing to do, for those guys will sandbag you and whipsaw you. They endlessly raise the stakes. If you open by allowing that gambling is connected with youth, they will call and raise you by saying that it is a neurosis. Bid that gambling can give pleasure, they return by saying—I quote Dr. Otto Fenichel in *The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis*—that the passion for gambling "is a displaced expression of conflicts around infantile sexuality, aroused by the fear of losing necessary reassurance regarding anxiety or guilt feelings." Aver that gambling issues in excitement, they—I quote Dr. Fenichel again—will counter by asserting that "the unconscious 'masturbatory fantasies' of gambling often center around patricide." I realize that W. H. Auden once remarked that "the attitude of psychology should always be, 'Have you heard this one?' " but "masturbatory fantasies" and "patricide"? Is this what is truly going on when one gambles? I wouldn't bet on it.

Freud claimed that much of what he knew he learned from the poets, and I, for one, would rather consult the poets than the Freudians on the subject of gambling. Unfortunately, the poets—and writers generally—do not seem to have had all that much to say about it. Pushkin's story "Queen of Spades" is about a young officer who commits murder in the attempt to obtain a secret system for winning at cards, a murder that is revenged when the system betrays him and causes him to live out his days in madness. Pushkin's is a morality tale and is not quite up to the mark either in explaining or depicting the passion for gambling. Dostoyevsky's *The Gambler* is much more like it. The novella's scenes set in the casino are absolutely convincing, not only in detail but in the understanding behind them of the wild roller coaster the gambler travels from exhilaration ("I was only aware of an immense enjoyment—success, victory, power—I don't know how to describe it") to damnable despair expressed in "calm fury" at realizing that one is not "above all these stupid ups and downs of fate" but finally, like everyone else, their victim. *The Gambler* is not among Dostoyevsky's great works; with its characters' propensity for bizarre behavior and the many loose ends that never quite get tied up at the story's conclusion, it is perhaps rather too Dostoyevskian, but it does have the immense authority of a work written by a man who knew his subject from the inside.

For my money, though, the best literary work on the subject of gambling was written by an outsider. That story is "James Pethel" in the collection *Seven Men* by Max Beerbohm, who, so far as I know, had no interest whatsoever in gambling. The James Pethel of Beerbohm's story is known as an active taker of big risks and one who has had tremendous good luck: in stock market speculation, at the baccarat tables at the casino at Dieppe, on wildly venturesome foreign investments. Beerbohm makes plain that the mere sight of habitual gamblers "always filled me with a depression bordering on disgust." Pethel, however, is no ordinary gambler. On the night that he and Beerbohm meet, after Beerbohm warns him that the water isn't safe to drink, Pethel is encouraged to order not one but two glasses of it, the risk of typhoid only making it more enticing. Casino gambling, one learns, is really only Pethel's way of keeping in trim for such ventures as swimming in dangerous water, driving at maniacal speed (with his wife and daughter, whom he dearly loves, and Beerbohm in the car), and stunt flying. Pethel is, in short, a risk freak, the ultimate gambler who can finally be stimulated only by the ultimate gambles—those in which his own life and the lives of those he loves are on the line. The story is made all the more chilling

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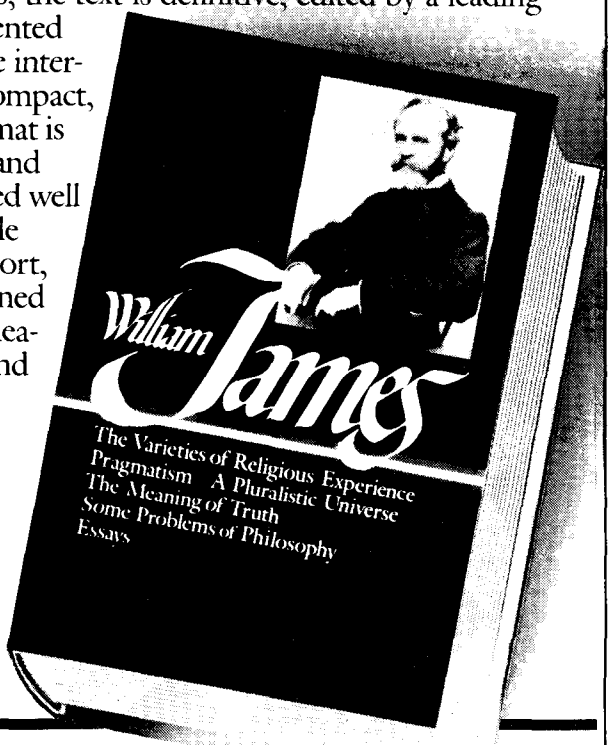

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when at the end we learn that Pethel has died of a heart attack after a flying session, with his daughter and her infant son aboard, and that he had been suffering from a bad heart condition for many years. Beerbohm, with consummate artistry, concludes: "Let not our hearts be vexed that his great luck was with him to the end."

Max Beerbohm despises James Pethel; adore Max Beerbohm though I do, I cannot come down so strongly on his creation, even though I recognize him for the monster he is. The reason I cannot is that through my veins run a few stray bacilli of the virulent virus that has him firmly in its grip. To the vast majority of people it never occurs to gamble—on anything. To others the possibility of gambling is scratched at the painful prospect of losing; Montaigne, interestingly, was among this group, for, though a cardplayer and crapshooter in his youth, he gave up gambling for the reason that, "however good a face I put upon my losses, I did not fail to feel stung by them within." A small group of us feel the same sting Montaigne did—with, I suspect, quite the same intensity—but persist. Why?

Why, I ask myself, do I, who am surely among the world's luckiest men (I touch wood as I write out that last clause), need to risk $330 on a series of baseball games, the outcome of which is otherwise of less than negligible interest to me? I think it has to do with the need I from time to time feel for venturing forth, for striking out against what has become the general quietude and orderliness of my life. As a boy, I never expected to live so calmly as I now do, with the risk of sending up my cholesterol count from eating an occasional steak being perhaps the biggest risk I take. I live, by a choice I do not quite recall having made, a quiet life, for the most part contemplating the world's foolishness instead of partaking in it directly. But when the quiet life grows too quiet, when it threatens to lapse into the most dread disease I know, which is fear of living, then I call on the antidote of gambling.

Perhaps there are quicker antidotes than a World Series bet on which the tension can be drawn out over more than a week's time. But this was the medicine nearest to hand, and I availed myself of it. Observing myself in action over the course of what turned out to be an extended gamble provided its own slightly tortured amusement. As the Series unfolded, I went from mild depression to measured hopefulness to dignified optimism to serene confidence. I passed a local jeweler's window and noted that he was running a sale of 40 percent off on Movado wristwatches. I already own a Movado watch, but I thought I might use my winnings to buy another. Then it occurred to me to begin a small gambling account, out of which I would begin betting more regularly than I do now. Grand plans were abuilding when—*wham*!— the St. Louis Cardinals, the team I had bet on, lost the last two games of the World Series, and I was seated at my desk writing out a check for $330.

The gods, it is pleasing to learn, are still watching over me.

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Plagues, History, and AIDS

ROBERT M. SWENSON

The plague bacillus never dies or disappears for good; it bides its time in bedrooms, cellars, trunks and bookshelves; and the day will come when, for the bane and enlightenment of men, it would rise up its rats again and send them forth to die in a happy city.

—The Plague, *Albert Camus*

IN DECEMBER 1981, an article appeared in the *New England Journal of Medicine* describing a curious cluster of seven men who, for no apparent reason, had severe infections with microorganisms that previously infected only profoundly immunocompromised individuals. Soon this became known as Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Since then, the number of cases has increased at a startling rate. By September 1987, more than 40,000 cases had been reported in the United States and an additional 50,000 cases have been recognized in 114 other countries. This worldwide outbreak of a new infectious disease has engendered much fear and apprehension. As a result, there have been frequent references to previous epidemics. Perhaps most frequent are references to the Black Death, the epidemic of bubonic plague that swept through Europe in the middle of the fourteenth century. Despite current fears, there has been little attempt to re-examine previous epidemics for comparisons and insights that may be relevant to the AIDS epidemic. Although it is early in the present epidemic, I believe one can begin to make these comparisons—that is, to place Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome in some sort of historical perspective.

There are at least three general ways to examine these questions. First, one can look at previous epidemics and the ways in which they have affected nations, politics, and even the course of history. Second, one can describe the internal "sociological anatomy" of an epidemic,

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the series of social and political responses that occur during the course of an epidemic. These reactions tend to be somewhat similar in all epidemics and are already occurring during the current outbreak of AIDS. Lastly, since AIDS is a sexually transmitted disease, it is illuminating to compare the response to AIDS with society's responses to other sexually transmitted diseases early in this century. Each of these approaches provides a somewhat different perspective.

Infectious diseases have had a major influence on Western history. Although epidemics have been frequent and devastating, one can categorize easily the small number of different ways in which epidemics have produced these effects. The first of these is through a widespread epidemic affecting the entire population relatively uniformly, resulting in the disruption of social structures and in long-term historical change. The most obvious, and perhaps only, example of this is the epidemic of bubonic plague that occurred in Europe in the fourteenth century. Epidemics may also have markedly different effects on different populations, resulting in significant shifts in the previous balance of power. The importation of smallpox into the Central American Indian population by the Spanish is a dramatic example of this effect. Many military battles, in which one military force is more severely affected than the other, can be viewed as a more common example of this phenomenon. In the last 150 years, many smaller epidemics have produced change through laws enacted in response to the epidemic. Many of our present-day public health laws were enacted during the recurrent cholera epidemics in the United States and England in the mid-nineteenth century. To begin to put AIDS in some historical perspective, it is, I think, helpful to examine some of these epidemics in greater detail.

Bubonic plague struck Europe in 1347, but events of the previous two hundred years had set the stage for this great epidemic. The eleventh and twelfth centuries were politically stable and relatively disease-free, and food production had increased dramatically. As a result, the population, which had been twenty-five million in 950 A.D., had tripled to seventy-five million by 1250 A.D. Around 1300 A.D., a significant drop occurred in the mean temperatures of Europe, and widespread crop failures ensued. The resulting famine forced many peasants to move to the towns, producing severe poverty and crowding. Under these conditions the black rat population also increased greatly.

In urban areas, plague is a disease affecting rats; it is spread by the rat flea. In an epidemic among rats (an epizootic), large numbers of rats die. (In Camus's *The Plague*, the epidemic is heralded by large numbers of dead rats suddenly appearing in the streets.) Infected fleas rapidly leave dead rats for a new host, and if other rats are not available, they will attempt to feed on humans, thereby infecting them. Thus, it is easy to see

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how, under the appropriate conditions of poverty, crowding, and poor sanitation, an epidemic such as this could occur.

Plague was already established in several areas in Asia. However, not until the mid-fourteenth century was overland travel efficient enough to carry plague westward to the Mediterranean Sea. The epidemic arrived in Marseilles in 1348, and by 1351 all of Europe was afflicted. The immediate effects of the epidemic were devastating. The most accurate estimate for total deaths during this first wave of the epidemic is twenty-five million, or one-third of the population of Europe. No segment of society was spared. Following this epidemic, recurrent waves of plague kept the population at this reduced level for another 150 years. The consequences of this epidemic were far-reaching. Since the population was devastated, real wages increased dramatically. As peasant wages increased, peasants were able to demand a commutation of their services. The population decreased more rapidly than the fall in food supplies, and the resultant drop in food prices made it impossible for landowners to support their large manors. These changes led directly to an end of the old manoral system.

The effects on clergy and the Catholic church were tremendous. The mortality among clerics was greater than 50 percent. Yet the epidemic had even more profound effects on the church and religious thinking. People turned away from traditional religion, which was perceived as having failed totally during the epidemic. Many turned to frenzied, superstitious religion (for example, the flagellants), and, for generations after, much religious thinking focused on the apocalypse. This dissatisfaction with the church contributed in a major way to the Reformation.

Medicine was also profoundly changed by the plague. Most cleric-physicians died. These physicians were viewed as having drastically failed, which resulted in a tremendous rise in the number and popularity of surgeons. New medical texts were developed, and the rudiments of scientific inquiry began. The initial theories of contagion were developed, and the concept of quarantine was first recognized. This resulted in the first rudimentary hospitals and the development of early public health measures. From this brief outline of the bubonic plague, it should be clear that its effects on Western history were great and long lasting.

Two additional points are extremely important. Plague could not occur where it did, when it did, or take the form it did until a variety of conditions had occurred to make it possible. For example, the urban population had to reach a certain density, and living conditions and sanitation had to decline to a certain level. The rat population had to reach a certain density and proximity to the human population. And, lastly, travel from Asia had to be sufficiently rapid and frequent to successfully bring the plague bacillus to the European continent. If any

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one of these had not occurred, the plague epidemic would not have happened. Furthermore, the devastating effects of plague continued because there were recurrent epidemics for the next 150 years. If there had been only a single initial epidemic, however catastrophic, the effects would not have been as great and certainly not as long lasting.

The most recent worldwide epidemic was the outbreak of influenza A that swept the world in 1918–19. The first cases of influenza were recognized at Camp Funston, Kansas. Two months later massive epidemics began in Spain, France, and England. The attack rates (number of cases per one hundred people) were extremely high, particularly among young adults. Despite massive public health measures, influenza spread rapidly throughout the world. By the time the pandemic ended in 1919, there had been one million deaths in the United States, ten million in India, and an estimated thirty million deaths throughout the world. Despite being the largest epidemic in history, it had little long-term effect, because, unlike the plague epidemic, the influenza epidemic was relatively short-lived and the population losses were rapidly replaced. (It seems callous, but it is true to say that the population itself is our most easily replaced resource.)

Epidemics have a major effect when the disease has a different effect on two populations—what scientists call a "differential impact." The most dramatic example of this is the importation of smallpox into Central America by the Spanish. Humans are the only reservoir for the smallpox virus, and transmission is only from human to human. After surviving infection there is complete, lifelong immunity. Thus, in areas where smallpox has been ongoing, the surviving population is immune, while in other areas where smallpox has not been present, the population remains susceptible. When Asians migrated across the Bering Strait sometime before 10,000 B.C., it appears that they did not take smallpox with them. For this reason, the native populations of the Americas were free of smallpox. By A.D. 1500, however, smallpox had long been established in Europe, and as a result the adult population was largely immune.

In 1520, a small expedition led by Pánfilo de Narvaez left Cuba and sailed for Central America. When the expedition landed in Mexico, one crewman had active smallpox, and infection was easily established in the susceptible Indian population. From there, smallpox spread rapidly through Central and South America. Epidemics recurred frequently throughout the sixteenth century, eventually complicated by measles epidemics. It has been estimated that out of a native population of twenty-five million, fifteen to eighteen million died of smallpox. Thus, a major factor, if not the major factor, in the Spanish conquest of the Americas was the importation of smallpox into the susceptible native

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population. (It has also been suggested that the immunity of the Spanish to this devastating disease had great psychological effect on the Indians, making the Spanish appear invincible.)

Throughout history, infectious diseases have had a major effect on military battles. Frequently, one army has suffered from disease more severely than the opposing force, drastically altering the outcome of a battle. In general, since the defending forces tend to be more resistant to their own endemic diseases, this differential effect is most marked on the invading force. A dramatic example occurred during Napoleon's invasion of Russia.

In June 1812, Napoleon assembled an army of almost five hundred thousand men to invade Russia. While traveling through Poland and western Russia, almost half of his troops died or were immobilized by typhus. By the time Napoleon began his retreat from Moscow, only eighty thousand able-bodied men remained. These catastrophic losses continued, and by June 1813 only three thousand soldiers remained alive to complete the retreat. The vast majority of deaths were the result of typhus and dysentery rather than battle injuries or exposure to the severe Russian winter. Thus, the power of Napoleon in Europe was broken more by diseases, especially typhus, than by military opposition.

From the mid-nineteenth century to the present, as government bureaucracies became larger and took control of more of society's functions, much smaller epidemics produced change through the legislation enacted in response to the epidemics. The cholera epidemics in the United States in 1832, 1849, and 1866 provide excellent examples of these changes.

The largest cholera epidemic began in 1832. The city of New Orleans was hardest hit with five thousand cases. By historical standards, this was a very small epidemic, but it engendered the clear beginnings of public health policy. In early 1832, the New York state legislature passed laws enabling communities to establish local boards of health, and in the summer of 1832 the New York City Board of Health was created. Quarantine regulations were passed and enforced. Cholera hospitals were established. Housing and care for the destitute were set up. Slum clearance was begun, and early efforts of food and drug control were undertaken. As the epidemic subsided, however, the government felt that these measures were no longer necessary, and the New York City Board was disbanded.

In 1854 John Snow demonstrated that cholera was spread through the contaminated water supply. By 1866 few physicians doubted that cholera was portable and transmissible. With the threat of a third cholera epidemic, New York State then passed a law creating the Metropolitan Sanitary District and Board of Health in New York City. This first strong, permanent board of health in the United States exists to this day. The

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sanitary and public health measures were similar to those employed in 1832 but were more extensive and rigidly enforced. They were also much more effective, as only 591 cases of cholera occurred in New York City during this epidemic. Many of these regulations remain in effect and form the basis of present-day public health policy.

One can also examine what I have referred to as the internal anatomy of an epidemic, by which I mean the behavioral response of both individuals and society to a given epidemic. It soon becomes apparent that there are certain attitudes and behaviors that recur during all epidemics.

First is the denial that the disease in question is even occurring. On June 26, 1832, the first cases of cholera developed in New York City. When the New York Medical Society stated publicly that these nine cases had been diagnosed, the announcement was immediately attacked by New Yorkers who felt it was premature or unwarranted. Business leaders were particularly upset, realizing that even the fear of cholera and a possible quarantine would be disastrous for the city's business. Not until six weeks later, when the evidence of the epidemic could no longer be suppressed, was it officially recognized by the New York Board of Health. Denial also occurs at a national level. Following the initial outbreak of influenza in 1918 at Camp Funston, Kansas, major epidemics occurred two months later in England, France, and Spain. Initially each country attempted to deny the occurrence of influenza within its borders (noting, of course, that influenza was already present somewhere else).

Once an epidemic is recognized, it follows quickly that someone (or something) else is blamed for it. As bubonic plague swept through Europe in 1348, it was claimed that it was caused by Jews who had poisoned wells. As a result, thousands of Jews were burned at the stake. The cholera epidemics in the United States fell disproportionately on the poor. At that time, poverty was viewed as a consequence of idleness and intemperance. The latter was also clearly felt to make one more susceptible to cholera. Since new immigrants were often the most poor, they were blamed for their own susceptibility to cholera, as well as for bringing the disease into the country. Prostitutes were also blamed for the epidemic, even though cholera was not thought to be a venereal disease. Many felt that their "moral corruption" caused them, as well as their clients, to develop cholera. Blame could also be placed at a national level. After the initial outbreak of influenza in the United States, epidemics occurred in Spain, England, and France. In addition to attempting to deny their own epidemics, the countries blamed one another. The French referred to the epidemic as the Plague of the Spanish Lady, and the English called it the French Disease. (Even today we refer to the Asian Flu.)

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Epidemics occur in part because old diseases are not yet understood or new diseases have arisen. In either case, physicians do not have the knowledge either to prevent the epidemic or to treat its victims effectively. As a result, society views the physicians and medicine of the time as having failed. A corollary of the failure of the existing methods of medicine is the rise of alternative therapies during an epidemic. During the plague epidemic, innumerable remedies and preventatives arose. This is hardly surprising since existing texts provided no effective treatment. During the first cholera epidemic in the United States, physicians routinely employed a limited array of unpleasant, even dangerous, therapies. The most common were calomel (a mercury compound that frequently resulted in mercury poisoning), laudanum (an opium compound), and bleeding. These measures failed to treat cholera and also had numerous untoward side effects. Given the failure and hazards of traditional medicine, it is no surprise that it was surpassed in popularity by botanical medicine during these early cholera epidemics.

A final effect that is common to all epidemics is that they stimulate a variety of new laws. Initially, these laws are viewed as immediately necessary to prevent or control an epidemic, but often they remain in effect long after the epidemic has subsided. For example, many laws were enacted prior to and during the cholera epidemics. Many of these laws continue in virtually their same form one hundred years later.

To understand the AIDS epidemic, it is helpful to review also society's responses to syphilis and gonorrhea in the early part of this century. At that time the organisms causing syphilis and gonorrhea had been identified, and it was clear that these were sexually transmitted diseases. Despite this, there were numerous obstacles to responding effectively to these epidemics.

With the realization that these were sexually transmitted diseases with grave health consequences (mental illness and infertility, for example), it was recognized that there was a need for sex education; yet great obstacles existed to what became known as the social hygiene movement. First, the remaining tenets of Victorian respectability made it virtually impossible to discuss venereal diseases. The basic assumption was that men were driven by lust and that discussing sex with them would only make them more uncontrollable. The major question became, How can sex education be presented to men without their recognizing the subject? The answer was to include much talk about plants, birds, bees, and little about sex. Given these subterfuges, there could be little effective sex education. Prince Morrow, a leader of the social hygiene movement, concluded, "Social sentiment holds that it is a greater violation of the properties of life publicly to mention venereal disease than privately to contract it."

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It also became clear that large numbers of middle-class wives were being infected by their husbands, who had contracted their infections from prostitutes. With the recognition that gonorrhea was now a common cause of infertility, some feared that the middle class was committing "race suicide." In response to the epidemic of venereal diseases among the middle class, physicians actively promulgated the idea of casual, nonsexual transmission (*sine coitu*) of syphilis and gonorrhea. At that time, it was apparently more important to protect the reputation of middle-class males than to provide a proper understanding of these diseases. The idea of casual transmission remains firmly entrenched to this day, even though there has never been evidence to support that it actually occurs.

As might be expected, prostitutes were blamed for the spread of venereal diseases. They were felt to be not only a moral threat but a health threat to the family as well. Because of this concern, the United States embarked on an effort to eradicate prostitution. Suggestions that prostitution could be regulated, as in France, were entirely unacceptable. As we shall see, all of these ideas have persisted in one form or another throughout the twentieth century with profound effects on our response to sexually transmitted diseases.

With this background, we can now turn to the epidemiology of AIDS. AIDS is the final stage of an infection caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). HIV, first identified in 1984, is an RNA containing retrovirus. The RNA is used as a template to make a complementary DNA sequence that is incorporated into the chromosome of the infected cell. Once incorporated into the host cell, the virus may remain latent for several years. The host cell infected is the T4 lymphocyte, a white blood cell that has the central role in controlling the entire immune system. Eventually HIV begins reproducing itself within the cell, and new virus particles escape from the cell by literally punching holes in its membrane, producing the death of the T4 lymphocyte. This slow, progressive destruction of T4 cells ultimately impairs the immune system to the point that a person becomes vulnerable to infections with organisms that would never infect someone with a "normal" immune system (that is, "opportunistic infections"). The immune system also carries out surveillance to prevent cancers from arising. As the immune system becomes progressively impaired, various cancers may also develop. The final stage of HIV infection, when opportunistic infections or cancers occur, is recognized as AIDS. It is important to remember that it is the combination of immune dysfunction caused by HIV *plus* the opportunistic infection or cancer that fulfills the definition of AIDS.

Where did HIV come from and how is it transmitted? Retroviruses are very old and have adapted themselves to a variety of animals. Over

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millions of years they have evolved to survive in higher mammals. Relatively recently they have infected the highest subhuman primates in Central Africa. In most animals they cause no disease and live a harmless, symbiotic relationship. Recently (in an evolutionary sense) the retrovirus has evolved further, so that it can now infect humans *and* destroy the cells it infects. It should be noted that HIV could only develop in an area where the highest subhuman primates are present to allow the gradual adaptation of HIV to a form that ultimately could infect humans.

The first evidence of human infection with HIV is found in serum samples obtained in Central Africa in 1959; the first AIDS cases are believed to have occurred in the late 1960s. By the mid-1970s, changes in modern air travel brought HIV to the rest of the world. Jumbo jets and decreased airfares produced dramatic increases in travel to and from Central Africa, distributing HIV widely. As fourteenth-century travel had to become rapid and efficient enough to bring plague from Asia, modern jet travel had to expand to Central Africa to bring HIV to the rest of the world. The earliest sites were probably central Europe and Haiti. The link to the United States appears to be homosexual males vacationing in the area of Port-au-Prince, Haiti. From there, HIV infection was carried to those areas with the largest concentrations of homosexual males, New York and San Francisco. Additional factors account for the rapid spread among homosexual males. First, anal intercourse is the most effective sexual means of transmitting HIV. Second, homosexual males are a small "sexually closed community," concentrated in a few major urban areas. Finally, with the Gay Liberation Movement it appears that promiscuity among homosexual males increased dramatically, producing rapid and widespread HIV infection among homosexual males. However, because of the long latent period between HIV infection and the development of AIDS, the first cases of AIDS did not occur in the United States until 1978.

The next group infected with HIV were intravenous drug users. Homosexual drug users, already infected with HIV, infected other intravenous drug users through the sharing of needles for injecting drugs. Drug users are also a relatively small, closed group, and HIV infection has spread rapidly among them. This second wave of the epidemic appears to be two to three years behind the first wave. Despite this, in some areas of New York, 80 percent of intravenous drug users are now infected.

The next wave of the epidemic, which is only barely beginning, is the spread of HIV infection to the sexual partners of bisexual males and intravenous drug users. Recent data indicate that early in the course of HIV infection a person is less infectious than later. This phenomenon

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has contributed another latent period, so that these cases are just now beginning to appear. The final wave of the epidemic, which has not yet begun, will be when HIV infection is spread widely into the remainder of the population.

A tremendous amount is known about the biology and transmissability of HIV. The virus is present in large numbers in blood and semen. HIV is also in vaginal secretions and breast milk in smaller but significant numbers. These are the only four fluids capable of transmitting infection. Moreover, transmitting HIV is very difficult. Transmission requires a large volume of blood (as in blood transfusions) or repeated inoculation of smaller volumes (as with intravenous drug users). While males can transmit infection through intercourse with males or females, anal intercourse appears to be more effective than vaginal intercourse. Despite this fact, neither is a particularly efficient method of transmitting HIV infection (less than a one-in-ten chance). The only other modes of transmission are perinatally (at the time of birth) and, perhaps, through breast milk to the newborn infant. HIV is found occasionally in small numbers in saliva, tears, urine, and amniotic fluid, although clearly in numbers too small to transmit infection. Because of this, casual transmission just does not occur. The risk of occupational infection among health care workers caring for infected patients also appears to be extremely low. In a careful study of single needle-stick exposures in health care workers, only one in more than twenty-four hundred has become infected with HIV. (In a similar situation with the hepatitis B virus, more than five hundred people would be infected.) The small number of occupational cases of HIV transmission (approximately eight) all appear to be related to unusual or excessive contact with blood.

There still appears to be a great deal of confusion about the meaning of the antibody test for HIV. Following infection with HIV, the virus begins multiplying within the body. The host's immune system recognizes the "foreign" virus and begins making antibodies directed against it. After three to six months, virtually all who have been infected develop specific antibodies against HIV. Despite this, nearly all people with the HIV antibody have live virus circulating in their blood; that is, they can transmit HIV infection to others. The presence of the HIV antibody means that the person has been *infected with* HIV (not exposed to HIV) *and* can transmit infection. This differs from other common infections, like measles, where the presence of antibodies means the person has been infected, is now immune, and the virus is no longer present in the body. A positive HIV antibody test means only that a person has been infected with the virus, not that he has AIDS. A diagnosis of AIDS is made only when an opportunistic infection or unusual cancer develops, fulfilling the case definition of AIDS.

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A final area of concern is the current extent of HIV infection not only in the United States but also in the remainder of the world. At present, there is very little data from Africa. Two small studies of female prostitutes in Kinshasa and Nairobi revealed that 60 to 80 percent of them are infected. Other data from Kinshasa suggest that 6 percent of the general population are infected, mostly in the twenty- to thirty-five-year age group. In rural areas, less than 0.5 percent of the population are infected. Heterosexual transmission is the major mode of spreading HIV in Africa. Re-use of needles for medical purposes and ritual scarification does not appear to play a significant role. Transmission by mosquitoes or other insects clearly does not occur (although this rumor appears indestructible). The World Health Organization has estimated that ten to twenty million people are infected with HIV throughout the world.

The data available from the United States is also incomplete. Approximately 80 percent of a group of homosexual males in San Francisco followed since the late 1970s for the hepatitis B vaccine trials are HIV positive. Seropositivity among homosexuals appears to be highly variable from place to place, and in other areas appears to be significantly less. In some areas of New York City, 80 percent of the intravenous drug users are seropositive, but this falls off dramatically as the distance from New York increases. The only data from the general population are from persons donating blood and from military recruits. Among blood donors with no history of being in a risk group, 4 per 10,000 are seropositive for HIV. As of May 1987, the prevalence of the HIV antibody among applicants for military service is 1.5 per 1,000, though in some urban areas, the prevalence is 5 to 15 per 1,000 among military recruits. Using all of these data, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that there are currently 1.5 to 2 million people infected with HIV in the United States.

How many of these people infected with HIV will eventually develop AIDS? The group followed longest has been the cohort of homosexual males in San Francisco. To date, 36 percent of HIV-positive males in this group have developed AIDS. Over the last three years, 5 percent per year have developed AIDS, and the number increases each year. Similar data have been obtained with groups of intravenous drug users. No one yet knows what percentage of HIV-infected individuals will ultimately develop AIDS.

Using these kinds of data, the CDC has estimated that there will be 270,000 cases of AIDS in the United States by 1991. More recent data suggest that there may be as many as 30 percent more cases (350,000). Projections for the rest of the world are as many as seven million cases by 1991. These estimates are minimum numbers based on numbers of people infected now. Even if transmission of HIV were halted today,

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these numbers of cases will still occur over the next four years. However, there is nothing to suggest that HIV transmission has slackened at all. Thus, it appears that the numbers of HIV-infected people will continue to increase for the foreseeable future.

Several assumptions are necessary in order to discuss fully the effect of the AIDS epidemic. First, it is certain that the number of persons infected with HIV will continue to grow. For now, the only methods of halting the spread of the virus are abstinence from sexual intercourse, "safe sex," or, in the case of drug users, stopping intravenous drug use. The threat of sexually transmitted diseases has never had a significant effect on sexual activity, and it is not likely to now. In less-developed areas, with little in the way of birth control programs, it seems inconceivable that condom use will be widely employed. Similarly, drug abuse programs for intravenous drug users have been notoriously ineffective. Finally, widespread travel will continue to carry HIV infection throughout the world.

Cases among homosexuals will continue to increase. But the next wave of the HIV infection—in intravenous drug users—will show the most dramatic increases. We are just beginning to see the third wave of the epidemic occurring in sexual partners of the first two groups. Since this reflects people infected several years ago, this wave of AIDS cases already seems predestined. The final wave of the epidemic is predicted among the remainder of the heterosexual population. Since all previous epidemics of sexually transmitted diseases have ultimately been spread and maintained by middle-class males (genital herpes and chlamydia are recent examples), there is no reason to suspect that HIV infection will be different. This portion of the epidemic may appear more slowly as infection is diluted into the much larger heterosexual segment of the population.

The fraction of HIV-infected individuals that develops AIDS will also continue to grow. As already noted, 5 percent of those infected with HIV have developed AIDS each year. Two years ago, 25 percent of homosexual males in the cohort had AIDS, last year 30 percent, and this year 35 percent. Next year, it will be 40 percent. No one knows how long this increase will continue.

There are two factors that may interrupt or slow these trends. Azidothymidine (AZT) is a new anti-viral drug that inhibits multiplication of HIV. Although clinically effective, it is limited by significant toxicity. Within five to seven years, safer and more effective drugs will probably be available. These drugs will dramatically alter the progression of HIV infection to AIDS, but they will remain expensive and difficult to distribute widely. Unless some dramatic change occurs, it will be virtually impossible to distribute these drugs to Third World countries. Vaccine development is a slow, tedious process. A safe, inexpen-

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sive, widely applicable vaccine will probably not be available for ten to fifteen years. To make a simple, stable vaccine available to Third World countries will take even longer, but both drug therapy and vaccines will be available much earlier for use in high-risk groups in the United States.

With this background information, one can begin to put the AIDS epidemic into some sort of perspective. How does this epidemic compare to the epidemic of plague in the fourteenth century? Simply stated, it doesn't and won't ever. During the first three years of the plague epidemic, one-third to one-half of the population of Europe died. Recurrent waves of plague kept the population at that level for 150 years. The closest contemporary analogy to the plague epidemic would be nuclear holocaust (or better yet, the nuclear winter following something less than total nuclear annihilation). Even if all twenty million people now infected should die, this number would still be less than the mortality during the influenza epidemic of 1918. The lasting effect of the AIDS epidemic will not be in the sheer numbers of lives lost.

There is one important analogy between the AIDS and plague epidemics. As with plague, the specific form of the AIDS epidemic has been determined by a number of specific factors. First, HIV could only arise in Africa where evolution through the highest subhuman primates could occur. Second, the hunting and slaughter of infected monkeys for food provided ample opportunity for the initial infection of humans. Third, the spread of HIV infection to the rest of the world required the development of rapid, frequent, and inexpensive travel to and from Africa. Fourth, it was exceedingly important that HIV was introduced into a smaller, closed community (that is, homosexual males) at a time when sexual activity and promiscuity had increased substantially. This provided the means to amplify dramatically the spread of HIV in this group. Finally, the sharing of needles among drug users was an efficient way of infecting this group, who then became the conduit of HIV infection to the remainder of heterosexual society. As with plague, if any of these had not occurred, the AIDS epidemic would have been changed significantly or perhaps would not even have occurred.

It is much more valuable to ponder the different effects the AIDS epidemic has on various populations. One way to view this phenomenon is to look at areas of the world that may be affected. For example, what effect will this epidemic have on Central Africa? In Africa, HIV infection will continue to increase, spread by heterosexual transmission, particularly in urban areas. The burden of infection will fall on two groups: young men and women, and children born to the infected women. This concentration of AIDS cases among young adults, the potential leaders, will likely have profound effects on the Central African nations. Already,

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cases of neonatal AIDS are beginning to erode the improvements in infant mortality rates attained over the past twenty years, and all indications suggest that these gains will be wiped out entirely by the AIDS epidemic. The economic drain will be immense and will likely extend far beyond the public health sector in these nations. Since it is unlikely that effective medications and vaccines, even when available, can be supplied to these countries before the end of the century, the consequences of this continuing epidemic will be devastating to these nations.

Since HIV infection is not distributed evenly throughout the population of the United States, it is also possible to look at the different effects on populations within this country. The most obvious group is homosexual and bisexual males. HIV infection is probably most widely spread among these groups. Since the available seroprevalence data tends to be from the most sexually active individuals, the 80 percent seropositivity of some studies cannot be generalized to all of the estimated twelve million homosexual males in the United States. Still, over the next ten years large numbers of homosexual males will die of AIDS. This will have many effects. Homosexual males have already dramatically altered their sexual behavior and will continue to do so. For example, the promiscuity of the recent past will continue to decrease. As long as AIDS is viewed as a homosexual disease, discrimination against homosexuals will increase. As a result, fewer homosexual males will make their sexual preference known. Little is understood about the factors and influences involved in choosing a sexual preference. Therefore, we have no idea what effect fear of this disease will have on young males in the process of choosing their sexual identity, although casual experimentation with homosexuality will probably decrease markedly. Finally, there will continue to be significant effects on those areas in which homosexuals may be concentrated, such as the creative arts. As the fourteenth-century plague epidemic focused writing and art on the apocalypse, this epidemic will alter the concerns of writers and artists of today. In a more general way, we are already reinterpreting contemporary experience in light of the AIDS epidemic and its effects. Almost daily one hears an analysis in some play, book, movie, or other creative work in the perspective of AIDS.

Intravenous drug users make up another group that will be profoundly affected. Currently, this is the fastest growing segment of the epidemic. There is little reason to believe that HIV infection will decrease among these drug users, who are the conduit of HIV infection into the remainder of heterosexual society. Thus, society will soon be faced with the question of spending large sums of money to attempt to rehabilitate drug users or spending similar sums of money to separate

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them in some way from the rest of society. Based on the experiences of past epidemics, there is little doubt that, faced with this choice, Americans will choose the latter.

Part of the problem is the long lag period between HIV infection and the development of AIDS. Because of this, by the time society recognizes AIDS cases in the heterosexual population, asymptomatic HIV infection will be well established in that segment of the population. When this happens, there will be even less perceived reason to rehabilitate drug users. In fact, the backlash of anger at drug users for spreading HIV infection to the rest of society will most likely result in severe punitive actions against them.

Like the cholera epidemics of the 1800s, AIDS has engendered and will continue to engender numerous new laws and regulations. To date, there has been a struggle between protecting individual rights and protecting the public safety. Some states have passed laws requiring informed consent for HIV antibody testing. Conversely, the federal government requires mandatory testing of some groups. Usually these are disenfranchised groups, such as prisoners or immigrants. (Since HIV infection is already widespread in the United States, there is little reason to deny a person entry into the country because he is infected. This type of law made sense in 1832 to prevent importation of cholera into a country in which it was not yet present.) As in previous epidemics, as the AIDS epidemic grows, concerns for public safety may well erode individual rights, and sentiment favoring mandatory testing will increase. Within a few years, mandatory testing will likely be the rule rather than the exception.

The "internal anatomy" of the AIDS epidemic has been strikingly similar to other epidemics in history. In the first years of the epidemic, it was common to hear statements that AIDS was not a major epidemic—that is, to deny its existence. This soon shifted to a more specific form of denial. As it became apparent that homosexual males and intravenous drug users were primarily affected, people began to deny that the disease would be spread into the rest of society. Although all the epidemiological data still suggests that AIDS will continue to spread gradually into all segments of society, there continues to be widespread denial or disbelief of this possibility. The slow spread and long incubation period have made it easy to deny the spread of HIV infection. At the moment, more than two million people, including many heterosexuals, are already infected, but the attention remains on the more dramatic AIDS cases occurring, thus far, almost exclusively in homosexual males and drug users.

The AIDS epidemic has provided ample opportunities to cast blame. The rest of the world blames Africa for "starting" the epidemic. In response, Africans deny that AIDS even exists in Africa. Americans

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blame homosexuals and drug users for starting and continuing the epidemic. For many, it is clearly the moral failings of these groups that have caused them to be infected. For example, some of America's evangelists cite AIDS as a sign of God's wrath on homosexuals and drug users. These attitudes are reminiscent of the nineteenth-century view that poverty was a moral failing and that cholera was God's wrath on the poor. The last feature common to all great epidemics is fear. Clearly, the fear of transmissability of HIV infection is tremendously exaggerated in the public's psyche. In fact, this paralyzing fear is the single major stumbling block to instituting reasonable, rational public policies. In the fourteenth century, we burned Jews at the stake; today we burn hemophiliacs' houses for fear that they will transmit HIV infection to our children. This is precious little progress in five hundred years.

Even those who have access to more accurate information are tremendously afraid. Just as in the nineteenth century when in New York City no doctors or nurses would care for patients in the cholera hospitals, health care workers today are extremely reluctant, and sometimes refuse, to care for AIDS patients. The administrations of hospitals, as well as physicians, are concerned that if they care for AIDS patients they will be perceived as AIDS hospitals or AIDS physicians. They fear that AIDS patients will be dumped on them and that other patients will flee from them.

As in other epidemics, present-day medicine has been criticized for its failures. With no cure for AIDS currently available, we have seen the rise of numerous alternative therapies. People have grasped at claims of the value of high doses of vitamins, various nutritional remedies, and other unproven remedies. Faced with an incurable illness, it is no surprise that people turn to these alternative therapies. Yet, despite a certain superficial sophistication, many of these alternative therapies seem strikingly similar to the claims of botanical medicine voiced more than 150 years ago during the cholera epidemics.

The current approach to controlling AIDS is similar to that proposed to control syphilis and gonorrhea in the early 1900s. For the vast majority of people, AIDS is, and will be, a sexually transmitted infection. Therefore, the only way to control transmission today is to educate people about this sexual transmission and its prevention—that is, "safe sex." In 1910, the question was, How can we teach men about sex without their recognizing the subject? Now the problem is only slightly different—How can we teach people about AIDS without talking about sex? Apparently most Americans firmly believe that talking to people about sex will cause them to engage in sex. It seems at times as if opponents of sex education would rather have people die from AIDS if the price of saving them is to have them learn about sex. This timidity

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has resulted in such confusing euphemisms as "exchange of body fluids." People will remain ignorant about HIV transmission until we are able to speak clearly and specifically about sex and sexual transmission.

The idea that sexually transmitted diseases can be spread by casual contact remains firmly entrenched in our culture. Despite the absence of any scientific evidence to support this idea, it has persisted to this day and contributes to the fear of casual transmission of HIV infection. Perhaps at some semi-conscious level, society still feels the need to maintain this belief. People realize it may be needed again when middle-class males begin bringing the HIV infection home to their wives. (There are many difficult things about being a physician caring for AIDS patients, but one of the more difficult is being with a family when a husband's bisexuality is first revealed to the rest of the family. At that moment, everyone firmly wishes that casual transmission did occur.)

All of these factors produce an unfortunate combination of circumstances for the AIDS epidemic in the United States. First, the epidemic is viewed as being confined to two socially unacceptable groups. Add to this the fact that HIV infection is transmitted in such unacceptable ways (that is, sex, particularly "perverted" sex, and illicit drugs), and it is no surprise that there is so little interest in controlling the epidemic among these groups or nervousness about caring for those who are infected. In this regard, it is revealing that very early in the epidemic, while little else was being done for homosexuals or drug users, a major effort was made to "protect our blood supply" when it was recognized as a potential route for HIV infection into society at large. I am certainly not critical of this important effort, but at the same time funds have been progressively withdrawn from drug abuse programs. This has undermined the only available effort to prevent the spread of HIV infection among drug users. Recent data has indicated the increasing prevalence of HIV infection among prostitutes. Since these women are another potential route for HIV infection into the rest of society, we will soon see increasing attention directed toward them. There are sound public health reasons to focus on groups such as this with a high prevalence of HIV infection. (This is analogous to the strategy of "selective containment" used to eradicate smallpox.) But this effort will also be fueled by the sense of blame and moral outrage already present toward prostitutes and, as a result, we will soon see increasing efforts to identify, test, and quarantine them. Conversely, in all likelihood, little attention will be paid to the middle-class males who provide the demand and economic incentive for their services. All of these developments will be strikingly similar to reactions to the cholera epidemics in the nineteenth century and to venereal diseases during the early part of this century.

Epidemics have recurred throughout history. As scientific under-

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standing has increased and superstitions subsided, much has changed about these epidemics. In very major ways, these changes have made the AIDS epidemic unlike any previous great epidemics. However, as I have tried to point out, in many ways society's responses to the AIDS epidemic thus far have been quite similar to previous societies' responses to epidemics. Although our advanced biotechnology has allowed us to apply sophisticated solutions to the biological problems of AIDS, our human responses have changed little from previous epidemics and hinder us from dealing effectively with many of the social problems that are part of the AIDS epidemic.

A Dream of Nightingales

(In memory of Jerry Thompson)

DAVID BERGMAN

The Friday before your funeral I taught
Keats to my sophomore class. Little did they care
for the truth of beauty or the grace of truth,
but his being "half in love with easeful death"
penetrated through the smugness of their youth,
and I thought of you drawing me to the rear
window one early spring to hear in rapture
a bird hidden among the flowering pear.

You held your cat tight so that he could not scare
off such music as hadn't been heard all winter.
When you flew South to escape the arctic blast
and home again heard that dark-winged creature sing,
tell me, did he then reveal himself at last
as you believed he'd be—pure and beckoning?

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How to Select a Supreme Court Justice

The Case of Robert Bork

DAVID P. BRYDEN

I SOMETIMES WONDER whether Republican Supreme Court choices are dictated by the same mischievous gremlin who controls Democratic conventions. Ever since Eisenhower chose Warren and Brennan, the record has been suggestive of some fundamental difficulties. Until he selected Judges Robert Bork and Douglas Ginsburg, President Reagan seemed to be an exception. Now we know better.

Some conservatives — for instance, the editors of *National Review* — expected that Judge Bork, like Colonel North, would put his accusers on the defensive. That prophecy failed to take account of several differences between them and their situations. As an American hero, North was better cast than Bork: lean, handsome, boyish, clean-shaven, brave, and *against* legal "technicalities" — a cowboy by Norman Rockwell instead of a monk by David Levine. More important, North wasn't trying to persuade anyone that he would be a good judge, or even a good secretary of state. He could appear to be over-zealous, and yet also win sympathy as a fall guy for spineless politicians and bureaucrats.

The battle over Bork was fought and won on political grounds. No one with even a modicum of political experience supposes that jurisprudential arguments were as influential as calls from constituents. Nevertheless, the testimony of law professors pro and con during the hearings was more than a sideshow. If nothing else, it was a fascinating chapter in the history of our attitudes toward the Court. Naturally, much of this testimony was about Judge Bork himself. But larger themes were also evident.

It is not easy to describe the Senate's proper role in approving Supreme Court justices. There's too much politics for a legal theory, but

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not enough for a political theory. Of course, the same can be said of constitutional law in general.

As an illustration, I offer several of the theories of judicial selection that were propounded during the Bork hearings. It is difficult to decide which theory displayed the most chutzpah. Certainly a leading candidate for that award was the administration's pious hope that "politics won't interfere" with the selection of a brilliant judge, a selection in which, of course, politics played no role.

As the nomination began to founder, the administration blamed "special interests," as if pro-abortionists, civil libertarians, and blacks were more selfish or parochial than anti-abortionists, police, and fundamentalists. It was even more amusing to hear senators explain some of Bork's more embarrassing utterances as "just a professor trying to be provocative." I can hardly wait to hear someone try that argument at a tenure meeting.

President Reagan had selected Judge Bork because of a perception, not persuasively disputed by anyone, that by and large Bork would be a reliable vote for the conservative side on controversial issues. In addition, Bork possessed considerable technical competence, but no one would have dreamed of suggesting that Reagan select Professor Ronald Dworkin instead, even if twenty honest deans were to certify that Dworkin is more competent than Bork. Why then should a liberal support Bork?

Several of the finest legal thinkers of our time undertook to answer that question before the Judiciary Committee. Although Bork's academic opponents were more numerous and conspicuous than his academic supporters, the latter group was at least as distinguished as the former. It included some of the best minds in the legal academy. If, as I believe, most of them fell short of justifying a liberal's vote for Bork, that failure surely reflects the difficulty of the task, not the deficiencies of those who undertook it.

Professor Henry Monaghan came right to the point: reject Bork, he told the senators, and the president will simply nominate another, equally conservative man, whom you will approve. We will never know for certain how Bork would have voted on the Court, and so we will never be able to say with assurance that Professor Monaghan has been refuted by events, but we can say that his reasoning was unpersuasive. The real question was not whether Reagan might triumph in the end. Of course he might. The question was whether, by defeating Bork, the liberals would improve their chances, however slightly, of getting a more acceptable (to them) justice. The answer to that question surely was yes. From their point of view, that was a sufficient justification for their efforts.

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Professor Daniel Meador, a thoughtful expert on the federal courts, argued that the Senate is "essentially in a reviewing posture" rather than "in a selecting or initiating posture." He called for "reasonably objective standards which can guide senators in a principled way and that can apply whatever the political configurations may be." The result, he suggested, shouldn't turn on the "happenstance" that we have a Republican president and a Democratic Senate. Political fights in these matters are "unseemly" and may lead to "idiosyncratic results."

Asserting that no serious questions had been raised about Bork's "legal ability" and "integrity," Professor Meador turned to the critical topic: "judicial philosophy," by which he meant "the nominee's conception of the role of courts under the Constitution and the nominee's approach to the task of judging." In his opinion, the Senate should accept any nominee who is "within the acceptable range of contemporary American legal thought." To determine whether this is so, he suggested three questions: "Is confirmation of the nominee supported by a substantial array of lawyers and legal scholars who are themselves well regarded and who come from various parts of the country and diverse legal settings?" If so, that "suggests rather strongly that the nominee is in the mainstream." Second: "Do the nominee's views about various legal doctrines and the task and approach to interpreting the Constitution have substantial support among other judges, lawyers, and legal scholars?" The virtue of these questions, said Meador, is that "they relieve the senators of having to referee these debates . . . which are impossible of definitive resolution." The third question applies to those who have been judges on lower courts: Has he been "an eccentric continual dissenter" and "Has he been reversed a significant number of times by a higher court?" If so, he is outside the mainstream. Applying all these criteria, Professor Meador concluded that Judge Bork should be confirmed.

Meador's criteria would be plausible, though not inevitable, if the Supreme Court's sole function were, say, to interpret the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. Even in that case, Bork's record of not being reversed by the Supreme Court would shed little light on whether he would create bad law as a justice. With that qualification, Meador's criteria would be sensible ones. The "acceptable range of American legal thought" would be pertinent, because that concept is rooted in disciplines like civil procedure, where most specialists have more or less the same premises and, therefore, competence is a relatively objective, technical question. But in the politically charged context of constitutional law, Meador's criteria are much less persuasive. How, for example, would the criteria apply to a Marxist? Marxists are hotly controversial, but so was Bork. In the contemporary legal academy, Marxists (or if

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you prefer, "neo-Marxists") are at least as respectable as conservatives like Bork — much more so, if we count only the most prestigious schools. Shall we reject them because their support in the practicing bar is too thin? Then what about Justice Brennan, and any number of ultra-liberal law professors? Should a conservative senator vote to confirm them? Perhaps so, but Professor Meador did not furnish an adequate reason, and it is not easy to discover one. After all, justices aren't analogous to members of the cabinet, who must be compatible with the president in order for the government to function smoothly and accountably.

The question is not whether political calculations should be made, but who should make them, and how much weight should be given to other factors. It would, no doubt, be more "seemly" if the Senate kept politics in the background, but it's hard to see why seemliness or avoidance of "idiosyncratic results" should be the paramount virtue in a process by which a free people select their rulers. (You may wish that the Court were less of a ruler, but the same logic applies to the decision whether to pick a justice who will try to reduce its role: it's a momentous political choice.) With our separation of powers, political results are often "idiosyncratic," but that doesn't justify legislative acquiescence in presidential nominations, least of all when the nominee is selected on ideological grounds.

Yet Meador had a point. While it is difficult to justify wholly ignoring political considerations during the confirmation process, it is also difficult to justify a wholly political approach. The Court, though inescapably political in interpreting constitutional ambiguities, is genuinely apolitical in other ways. The justices apply rules — freedom of speech, for example — with little or no regard for partisan advantage. They rarely or never trade votes, impose party discipline, or discriminate against members of the opposing party. The allegation that a justice has voted in such a way as to advance off-Court political ambitions is hardly ever made, and is treated as scandalous by friend and foe alike. One wonders how much of this would change if we thought of judicial merit solely in political terms. Indeed, why would we then select lawyers instead of party leaders for the Court? And why wouldn't we insist that nominees reveal in advance how they plan to vote on controversial issues? Why would we not amend the Constitution to abolish life tenure and require justices to stand for popular election? Why would the Court continue to write explanations of its edicts? (Congress feels no such obligation.) We may want a third legislative chamber, but if so let's face the fundamental issues squarely. In the meantime, there's something to be said for the custom of treating character and legal ability as the major questions in the confirmation process, even though we realize that the political stakes are high. True, some nominees have been rejected for political reasons.

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In recent decades, however, this has been rare. Some say that politics was decisive in the Senate's rejections of Haynsworth and Fortas (for chief justice), but it was not the ostensible ground, and here as in life generally the need for plausible hypocrisy serves as a restraint on misconduct.

As thus amended, Meador's thesis may be persuasive in the abstract. But it was a good deal less persuasive in Judge Bork's case. The campaign against Bork, though flagrantly political, was in response to a flagrantly political nomination. Of course, presidents don't choose justices by conducting politically neutral talent searches. In this sense, all nominations are political. But the nominee's political credentials are often at least slightly obscure, and may consist of little more than being a woman of the same party, or one of the president's political creditors. The nominee usually is not offered as the champion of a very well-defined agenda. Far more than most nominees, Judge Bork had become a symbol of positions on several specific, extremely controversial constitutional issues. For my present purpose, it doesn't matter whether we regard this as an understandable response to excessive judicial activism. The point remains: rejection of Judge Bork, especially when followed by approval of the discreet Judge Kennedy, sent a message that was as much anti-political as political. It asserted a more political role for the Senate, but it also warned presidents and potential nominees to be less overtly political.

Professor Paul Bator also testified for Bork. He pointed out that although the Senate has a "*right* to treat confirmation as a plebiscite on the nominee's views; and at various times various senators have followed that practice," there is also a contrary tradition: senators "have often acceded to the nomination of a well-qualified candidate notwithstanding disagreement with or misgivings about his or her views." Bator endorsed the latter tradition, urging the senators "to confirm candidates of great distinction even if there is sharp disagreement" with their views on particular issues.

In my opinion, however, Professor Bator's justifications for this conclusion were inadequate. He began by observing that it is difficult to predict "tomorrow's issues," and how the nominee will respond to them. The important question, therefore, is "the qualities of mind and spirit and conscience that he or she will bring to questions that we cannot even perceive today." This reasoning, if valid at all, seems to be as applicable to a president's selection of a nominee, as to the Senate's response. Would President Reagan have been well-advised, therefore, to nominate a thoughtful liberal activist of exemplary character? It is hard to believe that Professor Bator thinks that the president's search for conservative nominees was a waste of time because "tomorrow's issues" are unpredictable.

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The cliche about how difficult it is to predict judicial behavior, while it contains an element of truth, is seriously misleading. To be sure, party labels are not reliable indicators of a justice's votes. But ideology is another matter. Nominees with Bork's strong ideological credentials — William O. Douglas or the present chief justice, for instance — do not disappoint well-informed expectations. They aren't wholly predictable, but they are predictable enough to justify giving decisive weight to their attitudes toward "today's issues," if one has strong opinions about those issues.

This is not to say that the debate about Bork covered all of the most important questions about his attitudes. For example, the Senate showed little interest in constitutional property rights, an issue that may prove to be increasingly important during the next decade or two. On that kind of issue, principled judicial restraint leads to results that liberals generally favor. Yet the point should not be overstated. The politicians neglected such issues because their constituents were not excited about them, not because of difficulty in foreseeing that they will come before the Court.

Bator's second argument was that "a detailed inquisition into the nominee's views highly exaggerates the extent to which an individual justice's individual vote will determine the course of constitutional law." That, I think, is true: some of Bork's opponents played on wildly exaggerated fears about the likely consequences of his confirmation. But what of it? So far, the argument reminds me of a dean who argued against student participation on law school committees by observing (accurately) that committees have little effect on the quality of education. And therefore?

What follows, in Bator's view, is that "process" matters more than substance:

> The Supreme Court exercises huge power. It is critical that the process by which that power is exercised be as intellectually rigorous and honest as possible. And that is why it is of fundamental importance that the persons exercising that power be persons of the greatest possible professional distinction, equipped with powerful and wide-ranging minds and spirits. To make everything turn on agreement with the votes that we guess the nominee will cast underestimates the contribution to the Court and the country made by Justices of powerful intellectual gifts and great intellectual honesty.

There's something to this. All else being equal, well-written opinions are better than badly written ones, especially in fields where judicial opinions play a major role in shaping private behavior. Mediocre judges of all political persuasions have helped to create doctrinal messes that serve nobody's purposes. Honesty, diligence, and brains do matter, although perhaps slightly less so than in earlier eras. The Court has

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become increasingly bureaucratic. The justices rely heavily on their law clerks, even for first drafts of opinions, and lack a truly collegial intellectual life. Concurrences and dissents have proliferated. As Professor David O'Brien concluded in a recent study of the Court, it "now functions more like a legislative body relying simply on a tally of the votes to decide cases than like a collegial body working toward collective decisions and opinions."

In any event, Bator's politically neutral criteria are, again, ones that — if valid — apply as much to the president's nomination as to the Senate's confirmation. Would Professor Bator have suggested to President Reagan that he ignore substantive differences and nominate, say, Professor Burke Marshall of Yale Law School? If Bator had made such a suggestion, wouldn't Reagan have been right to reply that he wanted a competent conservative instead of a competent liberal? If so, why shouldn't a liberal senator reject Bork in order to get someone at least slightly less conservative?

Bator's final argument was an eloquent protest against "a narrow and partisan definition of what is to be deemed as orthodox and acceptable in constitutional debate." He stressed that the "mainstream includes *both* those who would give the Constitution the most expansive interpretation and allow judges to exercise a wide power to redress wrongs and expand rights as they see fit, *and* those who see a more limited role for the Court, closer to the text and intention of the framers . . . and who support a larger role for the democratic branches of government." Furthermore,

> many of the decisions agreement with which has been used in these hearings as a touchstone of whether one is acceptably right-minded or irremediably wrong-headed were themselves highly controversial decisions, many reached by 5-4 or 6-3 votes, with majorities and minorities often split in their reasoning 3 or 4 ways. What is the "mainstream" in this context?

This was an excellent point. But what follows? It would seem to follow that Bork was not as extremist as he had been portrayed. By the same reasoning, none of the liberal justices has been an extremist — not Brennan, not Marshall, not Goldberg or Fortas or Douglas or Warren. All of them, even in their most "extreme" opinions, were usually joined by two or more of their brethren. To conservatives' dismay, they often had a majority. It seems to follow that they were all "mainstream." It would be interesting to know which of them Professor Bator would reject on "process" grounds. If none of them would meet his standard, then it looks as if the standard isn't so neutral after all. If, on the other hand, he believes that a conservative senator should have voted to confirm such nominees, the question remains: why?

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Professor Eugene Rostow supplied an answer. Like the other pro-Bork witnesses, he recommended a considerable degree of deference to the president's choice: "The constitutional issue is whether you can honorably conclude that Judge Bork's jurisprudence is so outrageous as to fall outside the zone of the President's constitutional discretion in making nominations." Justifying this limited role for the Senate, he argued that, "the ebb and flow of politics have brought judges of different outlook to the Court as presidents and congress have changed," and this "has helped to keep the federal courts and the Supreme Court in particular close to the changing moral code of the country." Professor Rostow did not explain why a president is a better representative of "the changing moral code" than the Senate. It is difficult to see why, in a case where most senators disapprove of the nominee, we should presume that their position is less indicative of popular attitudes than the president's. Besides, the Supreme Court's role — especially as conceived by liberal activists — is largely anti-majoritarian. Given the political beliefs of Bork's opponents, why should they acquiesce in the "evolving moral standard" that led to Reagan's electoral victories? If they were disposed to acquiesce, they wouldn't favor judicial activism in the first place.

Rostow went on to note that "some of the most influential and useful judges in the history of the Court were not full members of what has been called here 'the mainstream' of constitutional opinion, but dissenters, often lonely voices in the wilderness, whose views prevailed in the long run." He mentioned Holmes, Brandeis, and the first Justice Harlan.

Fair enough. It follows that unorthodoxy, standing alone, should not disqualify a nominee. One should ask whether his unorthodoxies are good or bad. Was Professor Rostow suggesting that Bork's opponents had ignored this question?

In criticizing the neutral principles offered by various Bork supporters, I do not mean to suggest that one's attitude toward such a nomination should be determined solely by one's opinions on various issues of public policy. As some of Bork's supporters said, one may be more liberal than Bork and yet like his "judicial philosophy," not necessarily the details of his arguments, but the general idea that the Supreme Court should not play so large a role in governing the country as most of Bork's opponents want it to do. I don't think that this position is entirely separable — logically, or psychologically — from one's more directly "political" appraisals of current issues. And I don't think that it is a very common position, even among students of the Court. But neither is it simply a surrogate for opinions about legislative policy: one may disagree with *Roe* without disagreeing with a statute that says the same thing, and one may be suspicious of many regulations of business, not to mention the politicians' fiscal irresponsibility, without wanting the

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Court to assume responsibility for such problems. Professor Terrance Sandalow was the most cogent of the pro-Bork law professors, precisely because he stuck to this main issue, resisting the temptation to make debaters' points or arguments that could as readily be invoked in behalf of Justice Brennan as Judge Bork. Instead of making the dubious case for legislative passivity, he argued in effect that Bork would be a better justice than Brennan, because he would be less eager to expand the Court's role.

The anti-Bork side, though relatively straightforward, was not free of conceptual difficulties. The legalistic model of a Supreme Court justice, relied on by Bork's supporters, is inadequate. But so is the political model, relied on by some of his detractors. Some claimed, for instance, that the result was a triumph of democracy. If so, it was a strange sort of democracy. Unlike an ordinary political candidate, Bork could not be aggressive without seeming to confirm the allegation that he was too ideological and injudicious. This was an important handicap, because some constitutional problems lend themselves to conservative demagoguery, others to liberal demagoguery. On issues like *Griswold* — the Connecticut birth control case — it is the liberals who are in Colonel North's enviable position of being impatient with what appears to be evasive legalism. "Don't you think," they asked, "that a married couple has a right to privacy?" No doubt Judge Bork would have preferred to discuss school busing with Senator Kennedy, or the rights of criminal defendants with Senator Biden, but they had other plans. Assailed by politicians, Bork was unable to reply in kind because that's not the way a neutral judge is supposed to behave.

Some have suggested that the Senate's vote was a referendum on the Warren and Burger Courts. Perhaps this is true in the sense that hereafter no candidate for the Court will so prominently embody hostility to that legacy. But the Senate's rejection of Bork told us little or nothing that we didn't already know about popular attitudes. In a different setting, the result might well have been different. It's important to remember that Bork was judged in isolation. Whether our criterion is democracy or simply pragmatism, whether we are picking a justice or a fly rod, it's wise to think comparatively. I suppose that Judge Kennedy, for what it is worth, comes closer to the American mainstream than Judge Bork. But it is not at all clear that Bork would have lost if he had run against a liberal law professor, or even — though this is more doubtful — a clone of Justice Powell. In that case, each candidate would have been free to promise and to attack on a range of issues, including affirmative action, abortion, aid to parochial schools, pornography, drafting women, criminal justice, children's rights, and legalization of homosexuality. It would have been easier to draft a popular platform for Bork than for some

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of his critics; that, after all, is why his critics prefer courts to legislatures. The mere fact that Bork was controversial would not have been a liability; his opponent would also have become controversial.

The charge of "extremism" hurt Judge Bork, just as it hurt Barry Goldwater and George McGovern. It sounds like a neutral principle, but in reality it's a loose epithet, and — as Goldwater complained to President Eisenhower — highly subjective. (Goldwater observed that Ike's invasion of Normandy could be characterized as "extremism in the defense of liberty," yet it certainly was "no vice.")

When we measure judicial extremism, what is our standard of comparison? One possibility is to compare Bork (and his critics) with the average voter in the 1984 presidential election. That would be unfair, of course, because foreign policy and other extraneous factors affected the result. Another possible standard would be the views of the average citizen on constitutional issues, as revealed by opinion polls. With that standard, Judge Bork might emerge as a moderate or even an extreme liberal. Indeed, if McClosky and Brill are correct in their data about public attitudes toward civil liberty, the charge against Bork should have been "too mainstream" rather than "too extremist." We would not want a justice who is truly mainstream on issues of civil liberty, because mainstream America apparently doesn't believe in much civil liberty.

If the baseline for measuring Bork's extremism is the consensus of professors of constitutional law, then he is a right-wing extremist. But since professors of constitutional law are overwhelmingly liberal Democrats, their opinions are hardly a neutral baseline. The extremism charge, insofar as it was based on Bork's departures from the views of most legal scholars, rested at bottom on the same myth of political neutrality that Bork's supporters invoked. His supporters argued, in effect, that judges should be treated as if they were technicians. Their criterion was neutral expertise. Bork's detractors scoffed at this, but *their* law professors held themselves out as "experts" on constitutional law, entitled as such to evaluate Bork's qualifications. This claim rested on the same notion of neutral expertise. For if the Court — as we professors have so often stressed — is a "political" institution, why are the views of American Bar Association presidents and professors of constitutional law — two tiny and unrepresentative specks in the crowd — more pertinent than the views of other observers?

Professors tend to be more liberal than the general population, law professors tend to be more liberal than other professors, and law professors who specialize in constitutional law tend to be more liberal than either political scientists with the same specialty or law professors with other specialties. Ironically, law professors almost never believe in anything resembling a jurisprudence of original intention, even if they

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are conservative, while political scientists are much more evenly divided on the issue. Conservative and middle-of-the-road law professors generally avoid constitutional law, choosing relatively apolitical specialties like taxation, contracts, commercial law, securities regulation, and civil procedure. No doubt this is partly because of their interests and experience, but it also seems likely that they think of constitutional law as liberal territory and are reluctant to man forts in that wilderness.

In any event, "constitutional expertise" does not account for the massive opposition of law professors to Bork. Most professors of constitutional law would have been against him, once they understood his views, even if they had devoted their careers to analyzing Shakespeare's sonnets. Of course, as professors of constitutional law we possess several kinds of genuine expertise. Beyond question, we are better than physicists at predicting what the Court will do. We are also experts at legal reasoning, and particularly at spotting implications and inconsistencies. We know how to argue, as most laymen do not, from *Roe v. Wade* to constitutional legalization of homosexual behavior between consenting adults. Even in some of the most controversial fields, we can validly claim a degree of neutral expertise, not only about how to explain results, but even about how to decide cases. In the field of pornography, for example, we are more sensitive to problems of statutory vagueness, to line-drawing problems, and to the faults of administrative censorship. We see complexities that a physicist will probably miss. Perhaps on some issues our expertise helps us to see that Bork is wrong. Grant all this, and the fact remains that, on the main issues in the Bork battle, judging the judges is as subjective and political as judging itself. If the fighting issue is whether to overrule *Roe*, or *Bakke*, or *Miranda*, professors from New Haven are not necessarily wiser or less biased than grocers from Brooklyn.

The important question is not whether a judicial candidate is "extreme," but whether he's wrong. I disagree with Bork about several matters, but some of his most controversial ideas are sound or harmless or both. He was right, I think, to reject *Griswold* as an unwise venture in judicial legislation. Be that as it may, *Griswold* will not be overruled. (How would such a case even arise today?) And even if *Griswold* were overruled, and legislatures were once again in charge of the issue, contraceptives would continue to be available virtually everywhere, as indeed they were before the *Griswold* decision. At most, Bork's attitude toward *Griswold* is indicative of his opinions about related matters. But since his opinions about the important related matters are known, why worry about *Griswold?*

Several explanations occur to me. In the first place, most Americans treat *Griswold* as a legislative issue: contraception should be allowed,

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and therefore *Griswold* was a good decision. If one views the Court's role in this way, then getting rid of a pernicious Connecticut law was a victory for good government, analogous to a gubernatorial veto of a unique anti-Japanese law in California. As Holmes observed in another context, we tend to think dramatically rather than quantitatively, and "we live by symbols." *Griswold* is the kind of decision that symbolically legitimates our sexual values. To a believer, it is as pointless to discuss the consequences of *Griswold* as it would be, to another kind of believer, to discuss the consequences of "artificial" birth control.

In the abstract, everyone favors privacy, so Bork's rejection of the idea that "we have a right of privacy" sounded downright ominous — few paused to consider how little the constitutional privacy right has to do with what most people mean by privacy, or with how much of it they enjoy. Behind the scenes, the real "privacy" fight was mostly about abortion — the passion that this issue arouses helps to explain the fuss about *Griswold*.

Bork was also criticized for his attitude toward *Shelley v. Kraemer*. In *Shelley*, the Court decided, I think correctly, that judicial enforcement of a racially-restrictive covenant is state action denying blacks equal protection of the laws. The Court rejected the plausible argument that the judicial role in enforcing the covenant is a neutral act, like enforcement of any other private bargain, and therefore not a denial by the *state* of equal protection of the law. (The Constitution does not forbid private discrimination.) *Shelley* was another decision, criticized by Bork, that the Court will never overrule. Unless one believes that judges are simply legislators, a lawyer's attitude toward *Shelley* is a very poor test of his qualifications for the bench. *Shelley* was an extremely difficult case, and the Court's opinion was opaque and unpersuasive. When I discuss it with my class, I ask them whether judicial enforcement of a bequest to a Christian college would be an invalid "establishment of religion" by a state judge. Would enforcement of a promise to establish a scholarship for "needy Irish students" deny "equal protection of the laws" to needy Polish-Americans? Bork raised similar questions. I think that such cases can be distinguished from *Shelley*, but the point is that you don't have to be an opponent of racial progress to be troubled by *Shelley*.

Bork's worst ideas are no more foolish than several of the most common academic theories: that an Equal Rights Amendment would greatly improve the lot of women; that strict law enforcement is harmful to the black community; that "penumbras" are a proper legal substitute for provisions; that censorship of hard-core pornography would be a serious threat to freedom of speech; and that the rule of law is simply a cover for capitalist exploitation. In the hothouse of post-1960s constitu-

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tional thought, there are a hundred Borks. But he catch
because he is colored blue, which is not the background cc

On the other hand, it would be wrong to deny that Bork t
took, a starkly reactionary position on several constitutional issu
has done some forward-pedaling in recent years, and I will let others appraise that. But his notorious 1971 article, "Neutral Principles and Some First Amendment Problems," remains the text that horrified most liberals, and it's not difficult to see why. Like or dislike it as one may, this was the work of a legal James Burnham, prepared to reject even our most innocent-sounding certitudes en masse. Bork did support *Brown v. Board*. Beyond that, he found little to praise in modern constitutional law. We take it for granted that the First Amendment protects all sorts of literature; Bork said that it protects only explicitly political speech. We are accustomed to the clear and present danger test; Bork saw no reason why the Constitution should protect advocacy of illegal acts, though he added that legislators and prosecutors might wisely decline to pursue the more harmless sorts of advocacy. We are inclined to favor an expansive use of the equal protection clause to protect any class that's getting a raw deal from government; Bork wanted to draw the line closer to its original purpose, by limiting it to procedural equality for everyone, plus (as in *Brown*) certain substantive rights for blacks.

Just about every position Bork took has been taken at one time or another by one or more eminent jurists or scholars who were liberal heroes in their times. Most of them, however, had the good fortune to die before, or shortly after, history had made them unbearably reactionary. Bork's positions shock us today partly because they are obsolete; history went the other way, and even in 1971 his article had some of the absurdity of all lost causes: a debater can defend lost causes well enough in an American-style debate, but not if he has to persuade a modern audience that he is right. We are shocked, too, because we exaggerate the practical importance of constitutional law, believing, for example, that the emancipation of women has been due chiefly to the Supreme Court. One of the several ways in which judicial activism is self-legitimating is that it persuades us, insidiously, that social progress comes from rights, and rights come from the Court, more than from evolving customs or even statutes. As lawyers and law professors, we have neither the incentive nor the expertise to rebut this sort of loose thought.

In evaluating a candidate for the Court, even in a seminar room, we are discussing a practical question. In a rare case, perhaps, one should reject the candidate on principle, without regard to some of the practical consequences. We would not want a Nazi or a murderer on the Court even if we thought — as we might — that his votes in most of the cases

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that now come to the Court would be closer to ours than the votes of the person we imagine being chosen if he is rejected. Elevation to the Court is an honor; the justices — for better or worse — have some of the regal attributes of presidents. Judge Ginsburg's fate shows how far some right-wingers are prepared to go in their quest for moral purity on the Court, and the opposition to Bork, though more practical, also expressed moral outrage.

Once we decide that it would not offend our sense of decency to have a particular nominee on the Court, the main question is whether he is likely, on the whole, to pull the Court more in directions of which we approve than in ones of which we disapprove. Here again, judicial activism tends to be self-legitimating, because even those of us who care about legal craftsmanship will also care greatly about many of the policy issues that are now before the Court. Much as I admire intellect, I find myself thinking about the nominee's effect on the 5-4 decisions of which I am aware. In that sort of exercise, his extremism is not directly significant: shockingly extreme stances will not prevail and therefore are relevant only insofar as they suggest the likelihood of incorrect positions on other issues where the outcome is doubtful. I would not want Bork for a constitutional dictator; his rejection of the constitutional Enlightenment is too thoroughgoing for me. But as Professor Bator stressed, he would not have been a dictator. Given the other justices' views, the important question was not what Bork believed about *Shelley v. Kraemer* but what he believed about affirmative action and school busing; not what he once believed about whether the Fourteenth Amendment applies to women, but what he now believes about comparable worth; not what he believed about limiting the First Amendment to political speech, but what he believed about constitutional protection of pornography and homosexuality. On these live issues, he may be wrong, but he can hardly be described as a wild man. On the live issues, a conservative or even a moderate might reasonably prefer the votes of a Bork to those of a William Brennan, while also believing that Bork is wrong about some things, just as a liberal might reasonably prefer a Marxist to a Bork, without endorsing Marxism.

One might object to this line of reasoning on the ground that a man who has often been wrong in the past is likely to be wrong too often in the future. That sounds commonsensical, but how many of us consistently think that way about politics? Political issues evolve, and a Quaker who was wrong about World War II — by George McGovern's lights — becomes right — by McGovern's lights — in the era of Vietnam and Nicaragua. Similarly, a conservative who was wrong about the Civil Rights Act of 1964 may become right in an era of affirmative action.

Perhaps someday the Bork controversy will be regarded as a mile-

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stone in the Court's evolution. For the moment, however, this is unclear. It is difficult to imagine how the senators can continue to make judicial candidates accountable on constitutional problems, without making themselves accountable on the same problems, a result for which their enthusiasm is known to be weaker than that of political scientists. Bork was vulnerable because he had already taken inflammatory positions on controversial issues, so that he could not invoke the custom against discussing questions that might come before the Court. Until that custom is abolished, the selection of justices will lack some of the virtues and vices of regular politics.

Bork's nomination occurred at or near a decisive point in the Court's balance, with the other party in control of the Senate, and in the autumn of a lame-duck presidency. He endangered specific, much-cherished rights, unlike nominees who are known only to be standpat conservatives, and unlike those whose liberal activism is not perceived as a serious threat to any particular social practice or constituency. Prior to *Roe*, it might have been harder to obtain confirmation of a candidate who was known to favor a constitutional right to an abortion than of one who was known to oppose it. Now that the right exists, it is the proponents of abortion who have the extra ferocity of a defender of the status quo.

How are we to reconcile the passionate hostility to Bork with the much milder, even guardedly approving, response of some liberal law professors to Judge Kennedy? Perhaps some drew back from the intensely political implications of the Bork affair. Beyond that, I can think of two possible explanations. To begin, modern constitutional liberalism does not even appear to endanger property rights. At an abstract, theoretical level, Marxism and its variants have become prominent in legal literature. But at a more programmatic level, constitutional activists generally espouse causes that reflect establishment social values, not socialist economic values. By the same token, establishment lawyers, however devoted they may be to the free market, are often comfortable with secular schools, abortion, affirmative action, the ERA, legalization of homosexuality, increased rights for criminal defendants, and all the other controversial social concepts that liberal judicial activists favor. Unless strongly buttressed by ideology, their support of social conservatism is likely to waver at least occasionally. Even such conservative men as Reagan and Burger have not consistently opposed abortion, and, when you find a successful lawyer who abhors abortion, he's likely to favor a wall of separation between church and state, or leaving homosexuals alone, or some other heresy. That is one reason why so many Republican jurists — from Warren to the pot-smoking Ginsburg — have disappointed militant social conservatives. To a social conservative, only a "rigid ideologue" is trustworthy, because the class from which justices are drawn is not reliably "conservative."

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The social conservatives' problem is compounded by another factor. By and large, their quarrel with the liberal activists is about issues like school prayer that have already been resolved in the liberals' favor. To rip up the fabric of precedent, they need reactionary zealots, not mere Burkean conservatives or Wall Street lawyers. On both sides, Bork was perceived as such a man. To some liberals, Anthony Kennedy seemed "more open-minded." That sounds like a neutral virtue, but it is a virtue that we esteem most highly in our opponents. (One cannot imagine a liberal activist criticizing Justice Douglas or Justice Brennan as "insufficiently open-minded.")

One of the opening salvos in the attack on Bork was an article by Professor Ronald Dworkin in the *New York Review of Books*, perfectly titled "Bork the Radical." Professor Dworkin attacked Judge Bork as jurisprudentially incompetent. A major sign of this incompetence, said Dworkin, was his crabbed approach to precedent. More specifically, Bork had refused to ask what general principle underlay *Griswold* and *Roe*, and whether that same principle might protect homosexuals. In short, he was too political, not enough of a principled legal craftsman. Sound familiar? This, of course, was a new twist on the old criticisms of the Warren Court, by law professors like Henry Hart and, yes, Robert Bork. Liberals have not usually been thought of as exceedingly fastidious about jurisprudential matters, or devoted to stare decisis, or reluctant to have a politician on the Court, but Dworkin's argument expressed an appropriate ideology for liberal activists in 1987. The Warren-Burger era decisions are now hallowed precedents. Part of the explanation for liberals' greater willingness to accept Judge Kennedy, as contrasted with the "rigidly ideological" Bork, was that they perceived Bork as a reactionary, eager to overrule *Roe* and other decisions, while Judge Kennedy was perceived as a stop-look-and-listen conservative, a more lawyer-like man who, while cautious about creating rights, would also be at least somewhat respectful of precedent: a Gerald Ford but not a Barry Goldwater. The fight was more about retaining rights than about creating them. For in judicial politics, as in presidential politics, liberals have a longer list of old laws to protect than of new ones to enact. Their constitutional agenda, such as it is, consists largely of mopping-up operations after old battles that they didn't quite win. To finish the job, they need only lawyerly deductions from precedents. In this sense, and for the moment, they are the conservatives.

If you ask me whether this was the wrong way to select a Supreme Court justice, I will answer with a question: Compared to what? If we compare it to the way we select research assistants, the Senate's consideration of Bork may seem to have been fraught with distortions and illusions. If we compare it, more aptly, to a modern presidential

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election, it may seem to have been a model of intellectual inquiry. If we compare it, still more aptly, to the manner in which other Supreme Court nominees have been considered, most of us will feel at least some qualms about politicization of the selection process. But we should also feel some qualms about selecting rulers without considering how they will rule. If conservatives regret the manner in which Judge Bork was rejected, we should remind them of the manner in which Justices Brennan and Blackmun were approved. By rejecting Bork, then accepting Kennedy, the Senate chose a middle course between the political and the legal models of its responsibilities. Whatever one may think of the individuals involved, and of specific political tactics employed by their opponents, that, I submit, was the right course.

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The Knitting Lesson

ANNE-MARIE CUSAC

She knits to show me what she learned
With other needles years ago,
And from her hands I take the wool
(Once taken from her mother's hands),
Thinking if I learn, I'll know

How stitches might knit one with one,
One with the past, the lives of those
No longer living in the house
Built near fields of winter wheat,
And circling shadows, winter crows;

Where those who, never without work,
On those cold evenings sat and knit,
Listening to the words—the talk
Of weather, crops, what's bought and sold—
As if to make some sense of it;

Who glanced up, hearing children laugh,
Then turned to what they better knew,
The stitches, the rough touch of wool;
Pulled yarn together as if that
Might pull all life together, too.

✪ ANNE-MARIE CUSAC is an undergraduate at Northwestern University.

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Jigsaw Puzzles

ROBIN SEYFRIED

Sunday evening I tell my husband I want something
to do, something sedentary, I don't know
but not reading not thinking, I feel scattered, vaguely
dissatisfied—not sex not ice cream but something mindlessly
involving—not television—something for the hands
to take my mind off whatever
                I don't know
and my husband goes out and brings me back
jigsaw puzzles: thousands of pieces of autumn
landscape and a weathered farm in cardboard
boxes and that's it, that's just
what I had in mind if I had anything
in mind. I choose the farm
because it's smaller and easier (the landscape
is all fallen or falling leaves), because it has a road
with a boy and a fawn-colored cow and their legs
will be easy to find. I start with the border,
rummage in the box for straight edges, build a frame
of reference at the same time turning all the pieces
face up, sorting and grouping: the obvious sky
the packed dirt road
                as straight
as the road by my uncle's wheat farm that summer
the veils of heat above blacktop the guileless
grasses I find the cow's muzzle the boy's blue
sweater it must be late autumn late
in the afternoon there's a breeze
                cool and full
of promise as the creek that bordered my aunt's
truck farm here's the rusty farmhouse the barn's gaping doorway
the place inside where light stops
                my uncle Bill
kept cows once and chickens he was surprised I wanted
to take the warm eggs out from under wanted to ride

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on the green combine because my mother didn't
when she was a kid but I needed to let go to be lifted up
to a new place a different view to trust his hands
were hard and warm the dusty coveralls his hair wheat-
colored I wanted to touch to see everything as much
as possible all at once to belong to take
part and be myself
now I place the uncertain ones
together at one side maybe the barn roof or shady part
of the driveway impossible to tell sometimes
till most of the pieces are in maybe the path
beyond the border to the marbled fields the harvested
ones I search by color by shape for any clue
to what comes next fooled by the similar surprised
by sudden recognition how often the mind gives up
what the eye held clear I know the farm
the house and grounds will go quickly now
my husband
once owned part of a farm he misses the natural
order watching the hawks the mice in the grass everything
in its place and I miss it for him with him want it
for him it all goes so much faster
toward the last and then it's not really a picture
you can keep the process is all
that matters after all not the product the end
result.
Still I pause to admire my work
before I break it down, to silently thank
the boy, the cow, and the photographer,
the puzzle company, the cutting machine.
I am thankful for pieces that fit
the larger picture for even a glimpse
of how it turns out grateful
for my husband his love his knowing
what is needed for this moment of holding
together when everything falls
into place.

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Family Burying Ground

E. J. Renehan

No more the burying ground.
This district has been rezoned
for highway, and we are collecting
our family's bones. In the
morning sun my brother and I
uncover sixteen smiling skulls, one of which
debated Daniel Webster.

We are digging up each ancestor,
sorting them into sixteen
separate shoe-boxes
at the back of the
pickup.

We do dirty, vertical work. My
sweat drips into the
overturned ground.
The spade cuts nothing new,
opens only old
wounds.

My dog cannot stop sniffing the boxes.
He recognizes rare finds. He whines
when I lift them away from him;

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but he really can't expect to gnaw
on a jaw that debated Daniel Webster.

We dig carefully. We are inexperienced
ghouls. We are making discoveries.
We are staring into the
face
of the past. In
this skull was dreamed the dream of this
house; these
broken hands sketched it.

"At midday," he wrote in the diary of
1837, "the shadow of the peak will fall
on the ground where
we shall lay." Always in the
shadow to lay.
The grave and the house
will now both
give way.
What is a shadow?

A part of the slow chemistry of
dissolution. He is hardly
here. The
shadow will follow when
we drive up the
road.

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Manners into Morals

What the Victorians Knew

GERTRUDE HIMMELFARB

"MANNERS AND MORALS"— the expression is peculiarly, unmistakably Victorian. Not "manners" alone: Lord Chesterfield in the eighteenth century was fond of discoursing to his son on the supreme importance of manners (manners as distinct from—if necessary, in opposition to—morals). And not "morals" alone: philosophers had always taken this as their special province—indeed, had made it so elevated a subject that it had little to do with anything so mundane as manners.

It was the Victorians who combined those words so that they came trippingly off the tongue, as if they were one word. Manners were sanctified and moralized, so to speak, while morals were secularized and domesticated. When Thackeray earlier in the century, or Trollope later, protested that manners were taking precedence over morals, that "the way we live now" (in the memorable title of one of Trollope's last novels) encouraged the cultivation of manners at the expense of morals, it was because they themselves attached so much importance not only to morals but to the continuum of manners and morals.

Margaret Thatcher has been reported as saying that she would be pleased to restore all of the Victorian virtues with the exception of hypocrisy. If she did say that, she betrayed a serious misunderstanding of Victorian virtues. Hypocrisy, as La Rochefoucauld memorably put it, is "the homage that vice pays to virtue." It is also the homage that manners pay to morals. The Victorians thought it no small virtue to maintain the appearance, the manner, of good conduct even while violating some basic precept of morality.

This was, in fact, what the eminent Victorians did when they felt obliged to commit some transgression. They did not flout conventional morality; on the contrary, they tried to observe at least the manner of it.

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George Eliot, living with a man whom she could not marry because he could not legally be divorced from his wife, reproduced in their relationship all the forms of propriety. They lived together in a perfectly domestic, monogamous arrangement, quite as if they had been married. Indeed she called herself, and insisted that others call her, "Mrs. Lewes," and had the great satisfaction of hearing the real Mrs. Lewes voluntarily call her that. And when George Lewes died, after twenty-four years of this pseudo-marriage (one can hardly call it an affair), she almost immediately took the occasion to enter a real, a legal marriage with John Cross—with all the appurtenances thereof: a proper trousseau, a formal wedding in a church, a honeymoon. All of this shocked her friends more than her earlier pseudo-marriage because this seemed to them to be a real misalliance; her new husband was twenty years her junior and much her intellectual inferior.

And so too with other notorious "irregularities," as the Victorians delicately put it: extra-marital relationships (like that of John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor), or marital relationships that were unconsummated (the Carlyles and Ruskins), or homosexual relationships (such as were presumed to exist in the Oxford Movement). Those Victorians caught up in an irregular situation of this kind tried, as far as was humanly possible, to "regularize" it, to contain it within conventional forms, to domesticate and normalize it. When they could not do so (or even when they did), they agonized over it in diaries and letters—which they carefully preserved, and which is why we now know so much about these scandals. Like the "fastidious assassin" in Camus's *The Rebel*, who deliberately gave up his own life when he took the tyrant's life, so the Victorians insisted upon paying for their indiscretions. In the process they tormented themselves, one has the impression, more than they enjoyed themselves.

So, at least, it was until the end of the century, when the moral certitudes began to falter. "For the Englishman," Nietzsche wrote in 1889, "morality is not yet a problem." Not yet a problem, he thought, because the English still had the illusion that they could sustain a morality in the absence of religion; they did not realize how firmly rooted in Christianity their morality was. When Christianity lost its ascendancy, as it inevitably would, Nietzsche predicted, the English would discover how tenuous, how problematic, their morality was.

Nietzsche's words were prophetic—not, to be sure, for the English as a whole. But then Nietzsche was not talking about the English as a whole—the masses, or "slave class," as he called them, who mindlessly observed the manners and morals imposed upon them by the "priestly class." He was talking about the priestly class itself, the intellectual aristocracy, many of whom were atheists and some of whom came to

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think of themselves as "free souls," liberated from both religion and morality.

Nietzsche had no sooner made that pronouncement than public confirmation of it began to appear in the *fin de siècle* movement celebrated by such "esthetes" and "decadents," as they proudly described themselves, as Oscar Wilde and Aubrey Beardsley. It is interesting that from the beginning the movement was known under that French label, as if to suggest how alien it was to England—rather like the "French flu" or the "French pox." A character in a novel of the period remarks, in an execrable accent, "It's *fang-de-seeaycle* that does it, my dear, and education, and reading French."

The movement was well-named; it did not survive the *siècle*. The *Yellow Book* expired in 1897, Beardsley died the following year, and Wilde died in exile (appropriately in France) in 1900. In his last, and perhaps best, play, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Wilde delivered himself of one of those witticisms that was possibly truer than the author himself knew. "I hope," a young woman says, "you have not been leading a double life, pretending to be wicked and being really good all the time. That would be hypocrisy."

It was a nice accident of history that had Queen Victoria die in January 1901, so that the end of the reign coincided with the start of the new century. The end of the reign and, for an influential group of intellectuals—the new priestly class—the end of Victorianism. The high priests of Bloomsbury were not hypocritical in pretending to be more wicked than they were. Their only hypocrisy, recent scholarship has shown, was in concealing from the public the wickedness they flaunted in private. After the death of Leslie Stephen (the Victorian paterfamilias of Bloomsbury), his children moved from respectable Kensington to what was to become the new bohemia, Bloomsbury. "Everything was going to be new," his daughter announced. "Everything was going to be different. Everything was on trial." Later Virginia Stephen (Virginia Woolf, as we now know her) assigned a different date to that new era. "In or about December 1910," she pronounced with remarkable assurance, "human character changed." December 1910 was the date of the Post-Impressionist exhibition (organized by another member of the clan, Roger Fry) that so dramatically altered the artistic sensibilities of her generation. It was also, as Virginia Woolf saw it, the time when a new ethic was beginning to emerge to complement the new esthetic. Just as art now appeared to be autonomous, dependent on no external reality but only on the vision and imagination of the artist, so the character of the artist (or of the writer, or any other person of superior sensibility) was seen as autonomous, self-contained, not subject to the judgment of others

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nor bound by any sense of "obligation to others." The conventional idea, Virginia Woolf declared, of "living for others, not for ourselves," was intended for "timid natures who dare not allow their souls free play." Bloomsbury was made of sterner stuff. Later one of its founding fathers described its basic tenet. "We repudiated entirely," Maynard Keynes wrote, "customary morals, conventions and traditional wisdom. We were, that is to say, in the strict sense of the term, immoralists."

"Everything was on trial," Virginia Woolf had said. What was mainly on trial was Victorian morals and manners. Another member of Bloomsbury, Lytton Strachey, its most flamboyant member, had the audacious idea of putting on trial some of the most eminent Victorians—and by implication Victorianism as such. Strachey's *Eminent Victorians* was published in 1918. A half century earlier that title could have been used and understood in all sincerity. When Strachey used it, no one could mistake its satiric intent. Strachey made no secret of his purpose or his method. Ordinary history, he explained in his preface, proceeded by "the direct method of a scrupulous narration." The historian of the Victorian age had to adopt a "subtler strategy."

> He will attack his subject in unexpected places; he will fall upon the flank, or the rear; he will shoot a sudden, revealing searchlight into obscure recesses, hitherto undivined. He will row out over that great ocean of material, and lower down into it, here and there, a little bucket, which will bring up to the light of day some characteristic specimen, from those far depths, to be examined with a careful curiosity.

Strachey concluded his preface with the familiar adage: "Je n'impose rien; je ne propose rien; j'expose."

The eminent Victorians Strachey chose to expose were eminent in different fields. Cardinal Manning was an eminent ecclesiastic; Florence Nightingale an eminent social reformer; Dr. Arnold an eminent educator; General Gordon an eminent soldier and patriot. They were all eminences and, more to the point, heroes. Strachey's intention was to belittle and disparage them—"demystify" them, we say today, but "de-hero-ize" them would be more accurate. In each case what victorians knew as heroism Strachey interpreted as megalomania, a ruthless drive for self-aggrandizement. It is interesting that in seeking out the defects that would belie their heroism—in dipping his bucket into the depths of that murky sea—Strachey never came up with the two "dirty secrets" that a muckraking biographer would look for today: money and sex. Drunkenness, yes, and vanity, and willfulness, and irrationality, and physical flaws, but not financial gain and not sexual misconduct. If there was anything sexually scandalous about them, Strachey intimated, it was either their celibacy, as in the cases of Manning and Nightingale, or their

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conspicuous normality, as in the case of Dr. Arnold, who fulfilled his marital duties all too faithfully, as the existence of his ten children testified. (It is not surprising that there is no mention of Gordon's reputed homosexuality; that might have required Strachey to present him in a more sympathetic light.)

Apart from their megalomania, the one flaw they had in common, in Strachey's view, was their weakness for religion. They were all religious to a fault. Cardinal Manning might be forgiven for this; it was, after all, his job to be religious, although he went beyond the call of duty by believing what he preached. The others not only professed to believe when they had no obligation to do so; they actually did believe. Strachey's wicked comment about Florence Nightingale is often quoted: "She felt towards Him [God] as she might have felt towards a glorified sanitary engineer; . . . she seems hardly to distinguish between the Deity and the Drains." But Strachey was even more distressed by her truly religious feelings, her "mysterious moods of mysticism," her "morbid longings" to find peace in God. So, too, he was contemptuous of Dr. Arnold not merely because of his vulgar conception of education (the public school as a nursery for English gentlemen) but also because of his habit of communing with the "invisible world" and his resolve to do battle with the "wicked one." Some of Strachey's readers protested that he maligned General Gordon in the famous scene where the General is found seated at a table "upon which were an open Bible and an open bottle of brandy"; it was the open bottle of brandy that offended them. But Strachey himself made far more of the open Bible: the first paragraph of that essay has Gordon wandering in Jerusalem with a Bible under his arm, and the last paragraph has him "in some remote Nirvana" fluttering the pages of a "phantasmal Bible."

To "expose" the religious proclivities of these eminent Victorians, as Strachey saw it, was to expose, and undermine, the very foundations of their morality. It was also to expose them as frauds—not in the sense that they were hypocritical about their religion; the trouble was that they were not hypocritical; they were true believers. What was fraudulent, Strachey suggested, was their claim (or the claim made on their behalf) that they were heroes. Heroes could not be religious, any more than heroines could be seen—as Strachey depicted Florence Nightingale—putting a dog's wounded paw in a splint.

There were, in fact, no heroes in Strachey's scheme of things, because the heroic virtues were as suspect as all other virtues. And not only heroic virtues but heroic attitudes—the manners and morals, as it were, of heroism. For Strachey, religion, public service, civic education, and patriotism were absurd in themselves. But they were even more absurd in the manner of their pursuit—in the passionate, extravagant

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way heroes were wont to pursue them. And they were more absurd still in the manner of their reception, in the respect accorded them by a credulous and deferential public.

Early in Victoria's reign, another eminent Victorian (not satirized by Strachey, but he could well have been) wrote the classic defense of heroism. "Society," Carlyle wrote, "is founded on Hero-worship, . . . [the] reverence and obedience due to men really great and wise." Like Nietzsche anticipating the time when morality would have become "a problem" in England, so Carlyle anticipated the time when the heroic virtues would become problematic. Indeed he thought that time had already come. "Show our critics," he wrote in 1840, "a great man, a Luther for example, they begin to what they call 'account' for him; not to worship him, but take the dimensions of him,—and bring him out to be a little kind of man!" It is not clear which critics Carlyle had in mind when he wrote that—perhaps Mill or Bentham, those pettifogging, "dry-as-dust" rationalists. But his words apply even more aptly to Strachey.

> We will always take the liberty [Carlyle wrote] to deny altogether that [mot] of the witty Frenchman, that no man is a Hero to his valet-de-chambre. Or if so, it is not the Hero's blame, but the Valet's: that his soul, namely, is a mean *valet*-soul! . . . The Valet does not know a Hero when he sees him! Alas, no: it requires a kind of *Hero* to do that.

This is not to say that Carlyle saw no flaws in his heroes; on the contrary, he expected a hero's flaws, his vices, to be as large, as heroic, as his virtues. When the biographer of Sir Walter Scott was criticized by some reviewers for being indiscreet, for recounting episodes that made Scott appear (so the critics said) unheroic, Carlyle came to the biographer's defense. He took the occasion to mock the conventional pious biography. "How delicate, decent, is English biography, bless its mealy mouth."

In deriding the mealy-mouthed biography, Carlyle did not mean to condone the Strachey kind of biography that poor-mouths or bad-mouths its subject, reducing the hero to a "little kind of man." Still less would he have condoned the currently fashionable genre of history that disdains any kind of heroism or eminence, that reads history "from below," as is said, celebrating not individual heroes, not great men (or even great women), but rather *le petit peuple*, the "common men," the "anonymous masses."

One of the paradoxes of this new mode of history is that it professes to celebrate the common man while demeaning the virtues commonly associated with the common man. If Strachey's *Eminent Victorians* is in disfavor today, it is not so much because it is unscholarly history as because it is "elitist" history. It disparages the manners and morals of

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eminent Victorians but says nothing about the manners and ordinary Victorians. It is, a Marxist would say, insufficiently "de-mystifies" the heroic virtues but not the bourgeois virt Marx exhorting philosophers to turn their attention from t forms" of alienation to the "unholy forms"— from the illusory religion to the real world of exploitation—so the new historian is more interested in exposing the unholy, bourgeois virtues than the more exalted holy, heroic ones.

These bourgeois virtues are what Margaret Thatcher is presumably trying to restore—or rather bourgeois "values," as she is commonly misquoted, *virtues* being too moralistic, indeed too Victorian, a word for our enlightened age. These virtues—thrift, prudence, diligence, temperance, self-reliance—were indeed bourgeois virtues. But they were also classical virtues; they were hardly unfamiliar to the Greeks. They were also religious virtues; it was, after all, from the Jews and Christians that the Puritans derived them. And they were also working-class virtues. At least they were the virtues aspired to (not always successfully, but then all of us fall short of our aspirations) by the respectable Victorian working class.

"Respectable"—there's another Victorian word that makes us uncomfortable, that we can hardly utter without audible quotation marks around it. An influential school of historians today interprets the idea of respectability, and all the virtues connected with it, as instruments of "social control," the means by which the middle class sought to dominate the working class—a subtle and covert way of conducting the class struggle.

Some early applications of the social-control thesis were plausible, such as the idea that the modern clock made possible habits—promptness, regularity, conformity, rationality—that were useful for the "work-discipline" or "time-discipline" of an industrial, capitalist economy. Even here, however, the thesis has been extended to the point where it sometimes seems as if the clock had been invented for that very purpose (this a couple of centuries before the emergence of industrialism and capitalism), and as if the rural economy knew no form of "work-discipline," no imperatives of time—as if nature did not have its own rhythms that could be no less compelling and oppressive.

But there is a more serious flaw at the heart of this thesis. This is the assumption that the "Puritan ethic"—all those values invoked by Margaret Thatcher—was little more than a "work ethic" designed to "moralize" and "socialize" the new industrial proletariat, to imbue them with "middle-class values" that would make them more productive members of the labor force and more docile members of society. These "alien" values, the argument goes, were imposed upon the workers by a

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middle class that enjoyed a cultural as well as economic and political "hegemony," and were accepted by a working class beguiled by "false consciousness" and unable to perceive its own "indigenous" values and interests.

It is not clear what those indigenous values are supposed to have been—communal, presumably, rather than individualistic, and cooperative rather than competitive. One historian has said that it is only through the "distorting lens of middle-class aspirations to gentility" that the idea of "self-help," for example, can be understood. But does this mean that this idea—the value of self-reliance and independence—was alien to Victorian workers? Are we then to understand that dependency was more congenial to them? And what of the other alien, middle-class values supposedly imposed on them? Is it to be assumed that workers were naturally indolent rather than industrious, or profligate rather than frugal, or drunk rather than sober? And if these middle-class values reflected the interests of a capitalist society, does it mean that a socialist society would embrace a proletarian set of values—indolence, perhaps, or profligacy, or intemperance?

It must be remembered that the social-control thesis is advanced not by reactionary historians but by radical historians who are avowedly sympathetic to the working class, who, as E. P. Thompson put it in an often-quoted passage, want to rescue the poor and the oppressed from "the enormous condescension of posterity." One wonders, however, which is more condescending: to attribute to the Victorian working class a radically different set of values from those professed by the rest of society, or to assume that most workers essentially shared these so-called middle-class values and that, if they sometimes failed to abide by them, it was because of the difficult circumstances of life or the natural weaknesses of the human condition. Is it more condescending to describe these workers as the victims of "false consciousness" or to credit them with a true consciousness of their values and interests? False consciousness is a crucial part of the social-control thesis, because the radical historian has to account for the inconvenient fact that a great many workers seemed to view their own lives through that "distorting lens" of middle-class values. It was not only the so-called "labor aristocracy," as is sometimes claimed, that suffered from this myopia; lesser-skilled and unskilled workers did so as well, perhaps because they had most to lose if they lost their respectability.

These values, moreover, were shared—and consciously so—by the most radical workers. The memoirs of the Chartists provide poignant testimony of their efforts to remain hard-working, sober, frugal, clean—in short, respectable—in spite of all the temptations to the contrary. There were groups among the Chartists who made this their main

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concern—the Temperance Chartists and Education Chartists, as they were called. Indeed the central tenet of Chartism, universal suffrage, was based on just this claim to respectability. The argument for political equality depended on the argument for natural equality, a common human nature—common values, aspirations, and capacities.

As for those middle-class reformers, educators, political economists, and politicians who encouraged these values among the working classes—how condescending were they? Was it condescending on their part to credit the poor with the values that they prized so highly for themselves—and not only the values but the ability and the will to fulfill those values? Were they patronizing the poor when they applied to them a single standard of values rather than the double standard that had prevailed for so long—a double standard, incidentally, implicit in the social-control thesis? So far from keeping the working classes in a condition of inferiority and subservience, that single standard was an invitation to economic betterment, social advance, and, ultimately, political equality. It was also an attempt to bridge the "two nations" barrier dramatized by Disraeli. A single standard of values was conducive to a single culture, a single society, a single polity—and a single nation.

To the degree to which the Victorians succeeded in "bourgeoisifying" the ethos, they also democratized it. That ethos was not, to be sure, an exalted or heroic one. Hard work, sobriety, frugality, foresight—these were modest, mundane virtues, even lowly virtues. But they were virtues within the capacity of everyone; they did not assume any special breeding, or status, or talent, or valor, or grace—or even money. They were common virtues within the reach of common people. They were, so to speak, democratic virtues.

They were also liberal virtues. By putting a premium on ordinary virtues attainable by ordinary people, this Victorian ethos located responsibility and authority within each individual. It was no longer only the exceptional, heroic individual who was the master of his fate; all individuals could be their own masters. So far from promoting social control, the ethos had the effect of promoting self-control. This was, in fact, at the heart of Victorian morality: self-control, self-help, self-reliance, self-discipline. A liberal society, the Victorians believed, depended upon a moral citizenry. The stronger the voluntary exercise of morality on the part of each individual—the more internalized that morality—the weaker need be the external, coercive instruments of the state. For the Victorians, morality served as a substitute for law, just as law was a substitute for force.

And so too, in a sense, manners were a substitute for morals. Or perhaps not quite a substitute; that puts it too strongly. The Victorians

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were no utopians. They were acutely aware of the frailties of human nature, and thus of the need for whatever inducements or sanctions—social, religious, legal, ultimately physical—might be required to encourage virtue and discourage vice. A better image is that of the continuum. Manners were placed in a continuum with morals, as morals were with laws, and laws, as a last resort, with force. It was that great realist, and moralist, Machiavelli who said: "For as laws are necessary that good manners may be preserved, so there is need of good manners that laws may be maintained." And it was another great realist and moralist, the mentor of so many eminent Victorians, Edmund Burke, who wrote:

> Manners are of more importance than laws. Upon them, in a great measure, the laws depend. The law touches us but here and there, and now and then. Manners are what vex or soothe, corrupt or purify, exalt or debase, barbarize or refine us, by a constant, steady, uniform, insensible operation, like that of the air we breathe in. They give their whole form and colour to our lives. According to their quality, they aid morals, they supply them, or they totally destroy them.

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My Brilliant (Operatic) Career

ROBERT E. OLSEN

I HAVE BEEN AN OPERAPHILE since college, when a chance encounter with a choral masterpiece led me to purchase, at random, the old Nilsson-Windgassen-Solti recording of *Götterdämmerung.* It was wild and heady stuff, this Wagner opera—full of dwarfs and key changes—and I enjoyed it tremendously.

Over the twenty years since then, I have seen opera performances in many cities and have amassed a large collection of vocal discs and compact discs. Knowing of my passionate avocation, at Christmastime friends would give me anthologies of opera anecdotes, ties with titles from the French operatic repertoire (rather than repeating stripes), or sweatshirts bearing the stylized logo of the San Francisco Opera. For years, one of my adult fantasies was to brandish a Verdian sword on, say, the open-air stage of the Santa Fe Opera House, sing a two-note "*Addio!*" and exit left—in the general direction of Española.

In 1973, I moved to Denver to manage a bank subsidiary and to finish law school. The capital city of Colorado was then better known for cowboys and the omelette that bears its name than for culture. There were almost no performances of chamber music or modern dance in the city. Except for a brief summer festival in Central City, thirty miles out of town, performances of serious vocal music were largely confined to a downtown Italian restaurant, where costumed employees sang arias between Broadway show tunes and servings of rigatoni. The restaurant closed the following year. Promptly after graduation, I got out of the banking business, took a job as a securities lawyer with a Denver firm, bought a town house and a new car, and settled into a conventional life, punctuated only occasionally with bursts of indiscretion.

In 1980, an improbability occurred. Nathaniel Merrill, who had been the Met's resident stage director for twenty-eight years, founded a new regional company, Opera Colorado, in Denver, and became its general director. During the Bing regime, every other opera produced at the Met had borne Merrill's imprint, and he was world famous. Four years after Merrill's arrival in Denver—the year after Opera Colorado's first sea-

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son—I escorted a very bored country-and-western fan to a fundraising ball to benefit Opera Colorado. For the occasion I rented for myself the costume of one of Cyrano de Bergerac's followers, complete with breeches and plumed chevalier's hat; for my date, I rented the Queen of the Fairies outfit from a local production of *Midsummer Night's Dream.* The highlight of my evening came when Merrill finished a funny story about his early days as an impressario in Philadelphia, where he had learned at the knee of a Mafia boss. He descended from a makeshift stage, on which a concert version of *Ballo in Maschera* was about to be performed, and said to my date and me, in sotto voce, "You look great!"

In the spring of 1987, for its fifth season, Opera Colorado scheduled four performances each of *Manon Lescaut* and *Samson et Dalila.* The Canadian tenor Jon Vickers was to sing the role of Samson, and Vasile Moldoveanu was to sing the tenor lead in *Manon.* In mid-March, an announcement appeared in the *Denver Post* that the company was seeking "supers," those non-singing walk-ons who clutter opera stages, for the productions. I called immediately and left my name. Two days later, a friend told me that the Opera Colorado chorus might also be taking applications. On a dare, I called the company from a supermarket pay phone to inquire further.

I was told that there were a few last-minute openings for male singers and was invited to call Louise Sherman, Merrill's wife and the Opera Colorado chorus master, at another number. I did so. Merrill himself answered the telephone and, with my self-confidence beginning to slip away, I asked for Miss Sherman.

When Louise Sherman came to the phone, she said that chorus rehearsals had started in January, but that, owing to the large size of the *Samson* chorus, she could use six or seven more male singers. Could I come over that evening for an audition? I was taken aback. No, I told her, I had other plans.

"How about tomorrow, then?" she persisted.

"All right," I said, and we agreed on a time.

"Bring your sheet music," Miss Sherman said. "Any art song will do."

Sheet music, I thought, beginning to panic. Who has sheet music? I told the chorus master that I had a nice collection of recorded music and libretti, but no sheet music.

"Anything will do," she said warily, after confirming that I could at least read music passably. "I've even had people audition with 'My country 'tis of thee.'"

I returned home determined to prove that twenty years of enthusiasm for opera would allow me to prepare a baritone aria for my audition. At least I assumed I was a baritone. Spreading boxed sets of records on the floor of my den in front of the speakers, I studied Leporello's second aria

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from *Don Giovanni*—the one where he computes the Don's conquests at 1003 in Spain alone—and Baron Scarpia's entrance in the first act of *Tosca*. I slowly came to understand why Tito Gobbi, Sherrill Milnes, and their colleagues, and not I, had been singing these songs for posterity. I seemed to have a narrow range, somewhat below that of a standard baritone, and the arias I listened to proceeded at a breathtaking pace. Moreover, although I had been taking Italian lessons for six months, I was not sure I could adequately memorize or even pronounce the words of these arias for my audition the next day. In short, these familiar arias were far easier to listen to than to sing.

I looked for something else—the male chorus from *Cavalleria Rusticana*, perhaps, or the Anvil Chorus from *Trovatore*—but neither of these seemed to work, at least for me. They were either too monotonous or too slow. Finally, in despair, I settled on a medley of Stephen Foster songs, hoping, illogically, that Louise Sherman, who had prepared soloists for many of the world's great opera houses, would regard the popular American composer as an artist of the same rank as, say, Bellini.

The next day, I arrived at the Merrill town house with my Foster scores obtained from the public library, was greeted warmly by Louise Sherman and the family's oversized mutt, and consented to complete a curriculum vitae of my life in voice. There were a lot of blank spaces when I finished the form. I considered, but decided against, noting the plaudits of my junior high choral director or my audition, unsuccessful as it turned out, for the role of an Eastern Onion singing-telegram deliveryman. Miss Sherman, who had once been Leonard Bernstein's assistant, had attractive and fearsome eyes that swept away to the sides of her head, like the wings of a Valkyrie's helmet. As she seated herself at the keyboard of a concert grand piano in the corner of the living room, I told her I was going to sing Stephen Foster and possibly even "My country 'tis of thee."

"How nice," she said charitably. "I haven't played Foster in a long time."

I started by singing "Beautiful Dreamer" with a tentative bass-baritone voice, and then I murdered the lyrics of the patriotic song. As I recall, the first verse of "My country 'tis of thee" has something to do with forefathers and Pilgrims, but in my version it was not clear which of them had died or had pride.

"Just sing 'la la' when you forget the words," Miss Sherman laughed.

She then put me through a series of scales and arpeggios, had me try to bellow operatically, quizzed me on my language skills—I knew no French—and the times I would be available, and made me affirm that I was a quick study. Summing up, she told me that I had sung on key with little sense of breath control but with minimum vibratto. "That's

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good," she said, and added decisively, "I'll take a chance on you."

"Musically, you mean?" I asked sheepishly.

"No," she said, "on your ability to learn the French lyrics of *Samson* in six weeks." If I failed, she added ominously, handing me my scores and rehearsal schedule, she would have to make "some changes" for the sake of what she called artistic integrity. In *Manon*, she said, I would be a young *borghese*. In *Samson* I would play a Hebrew in the first act and a Philistine in the third act. For ten minutes, dutifully listening as Louise Sherman flipped the pages of the scores, commenting on what she saw, I marked the music I was to memorize, complete with elisions and preferred pronunciations. Walking me to the door, she told me that she would have a contract for me to sign in a few days and that the compensation, while nominal, would at least cover my expenses. At that moment, not even realizing that I had been auditioning for a paid position, I crossed the proscenium arch and became an opera singer.

The second staging of *Samson* was scheduled for the following night in the gymnasium of a country day school. I rushed out and bought the only available recording of the opera on audio cassette, a portable cassette player-recorder, and three blank tapes. I intended to record key rehearsals as study aids. Without knowing how a veteran singer would learn his part, I decided that I would first become familiar with the music of each opera as a whole, then concentrate on the music of my parts, and last, learn the lyrics and French diction of *Samson*. Until my first rehearsal, I spent my waking hours walking about town with my ears wired for sound, listening to the Domingo-Obraztsova version of the Saint-Saëns opera.

Rehearsals were scheduled for three or four nights per week until two weeks before the first performance on May 2, when they would become a daily affair. A couple of weeks of *Samson* rehearsals were to be followed by four or five *Manon* rehearsals, and so on. I arrived on time for the first rehearsal and found that my name had been added in pencil to the nightly chorus sign-in sheets. For several rehearsals, my name alternated between the bass and baritone sections of the sign-in sheets before settling on the former. I also found a yellow identification tag with my name and some cryptic symbols on it. Every chorister had one. I pinned the tag to my shirt front.

Michael Di Nuova, a fellow student in my Italian class, was also a member of the chorus. A lawyer with whom I had once done a deal was too. So was the neighbor of a former girlfriend; he remembered my face but not my name. The 120 others were strangers but generally outgoing. "Is this your first year in the chorus?" one asked. "It's my first week," I responded.

"Robert," said Louise Sherman, "Nat's going to block out the action for the others. Just sit on the side and try to pick up the music."

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Not for the last time, however, Merrill would have none of his wife's plans. Within minutes, he had me kneeling on a mock-stage at the one o'clock position—because Denver's Boettcher Hall, where the company performs, is a theater in the round, there is no "upstage," "downstage," "left," or "right"—having me join, as a victorious Hebrew warrior, in the act 1, scene 5, "Hymn of Joy," sung by the bass and baritone members of the chorus. Composed in four notes, it was perhaps the only set piece of choral music from *Samson* that I then knew, and I sang it with the aid of a hastily completed set of cheat sheets. These were three-by-five-inch index cards containing the lyrics, score page references, and—as time went by—notations of difficult rhythms, cues, entrances, and phonetic spellings. ("Count five, an octave below Samson's ending E-flat, 'tray-sigh-ay,' ♩.♫♩♪" was typical.) While I sang, Merrill stood four feet from me fiddling with a clipboard, but actually, I knew, listening to me and testing his wife's judgment in hiring me. I had no role in act 1, scene 6, but before the evening ended, Miss Sherman had the chorus sing the last part of act 3, a frenzied paean to a pagan god, which left me fumbling in my score, unable even to follow what the others were doing.

As the first several weeks of rehearsal passed, I realized that the music I was now attempting to sing bore little resemblance to the simple fugues and three-part harmony of my school choral pieces. Puccini's "tricky rhythms," as Louise Sherman called them, often in nine-eighths or twelve-eighths time, were compounded by many spoken contractions. A series of seven eighth notes to which "La sua luce e il suo furor" was supposed to be sung was my favorite near impossibility. Saint-Saëns, meanwhile, while composing music of box-like regularity for the soloists, sometimes makes the chorus sing discordantly or at variance with the rhythms of spoken French. "How do you find the note?" I asked Michael Di Nuova, a baritone, when the chorus's "oui, davant sa colere, tout s'epouvant et fuit" in act 1 stumped me. *Samson* ends on E and the chorus sings four-part monotones in D, E, F, and G respectively. "Just pick a note and stick with it," he told me cynically.

With the rehearsal schedule alternating between the two operas, at first I felt like a hapless dancing-school student, not quite getting the knack of a rumba before moving on to the Texas two-step. I struggled with entrances, sometimes coming in two beats too soon. Such gaffes and the muted curses that often followed, I learned, were generally a source of great amusement to the chorus. I spent a half hour one day trying to master one syncopated line in the bass choral part near the end of *Samson*. I devoted every free night to studying my scores, my tape of a piano transcription of the choral parts in *Manon*, and an even simpler transcription that, for ten dollars, I had commissioned a local piano student to play for me while I recorded. I gladly attended an impromptu

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review rehearsal of *Samson*, since I had missed nearly all of the pure music preparation.

Gradually, I caught on until, after one rehearsal in mid-April, I realized that I knew the music of the third act of *Samson*. "I know you do," said Louise Sherman. "I can tell by watching you. You're doing great." I was so elated by her customary support and approval that I picked up a bottle of champagne after the rehearsal and stopped by the home of a friend for a late night celebration. I spent the next two weeks before dress rehearsals memorizing the lyrics of both operas as if they were poetry—fortunately, much of *Samson* is in fact singsong poetry—and working on difficult rhythms and cues. I sang along from memory with a season-ending Metropolitan Opera radio broadcast of *Samson* and was disappointed when I found myself singing "la la" far too often.

Many assistants helped to prepare the chorus. Throughout the early part of the rehearsal schedule, assistant conductors standing on chairs emulated the television monitors that, at Boettcher Hall, were to display the maestro at five positions around the circular stage. Other assistants made hurried diagrams of Merrill's sometimes improvised, and always fluid, stage directions. Still others seemed to be principally engaged in trying to quiet the chorus. A former assistant conductor of the Denver Symphony Orchestra, an Englishman, not only had charge of a group of choristers in the pit but also supplied Samson's arias in a charming Cambridge accent until Jon Vickers arrived. A conservatively attired woman identified only as Cynthia constantly corrected our French diction. "It's *suhr*, not *sir*," she would say. "Get the *r* farther back in your mouth." By dress rehearsals, chorus members were amusing each other with imitations of Cynthia's spirited pronunciation of *puissance*.

As dress rehearsals approached, a variety of musicians from such exotic locations as the Metropolitan Opera, the Chicago Lyric Opera, and the Dallas Opera were introduced to the chorus as assistants to Merrill, Sherman, or the conductors. Mostly they played piano accompaniment, often quite well. From this I concluded that a kind of guild tradition survives in opera. The pay might not be great, but there are titles galore, fit for future inclusion in resumés, waiting for volunteer apprentices.

As each anonymous assistant was introduced, the chorus would applaud politely. The etiquette of opera, I observed, requires expressions of mutual support. The soloists, denominated "artists" to distinguish them from mere choristers or the ballet dancers (and of course from "supers"), were always identified by name and opera company, as they gradually joined the chorus for rehearsals. The chorus also applauded the artists, sometimes perfunctorily and sometimes, as in the case of Viorica Cortez of the Paris Opera, who was to sing Delilah, with great enthusiasm. Well-sung arias earned the artists "bravos" at every re-

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hearsal, even when partly sung in headtone or down an octave to save vocal wear and tear. The soloists, in turn, particularly those just recently graduated from the bit roles to which most choristers aspired, were generous in complimenting the chorus for music well sung. Less openly, some choristers would criticize the voices of the soloists. "He has a dark voice for a tenor," a light-voiced baritone in the chorus said of *Manon*'s Des Grieux one day. A soprano quieted a similar comment of mine with the admonition that I was "in the biz now." In other words, I should keep in mind, and respect, the gradations of status and the constant need for stroking that were inherent in the opera "business."

One of the cryptic symbols on my identification card at that first rehearsal had been the letter *F*. Six or seven choristers who were assigned that letter formed a group for staging purposes. We were expected to huddle and move together in Merrill's complicated choreographies. Group F was made up of a cross section of the chorus and included a twenty-five-year-old male professional singer who was temporarily managing a hamburger restaurant—he spent much of his time coveting a strikingly beautiful hispanic super (a maid in the first and second acts of *Manon*, a whore, or "super whore," in the third) and hugging nubile chorus regulars—a man with a beautiful strong tenor voice and a spiky haircut; a gracious young mother who assumed the role of a male student in *Manon;* a twenty-seven-year-old woman who became the young mother's stage girlfriend; and a pleasantly chubby male tenor struggling with both Italian diction and some of his entrances. The gender imbalance of Group F made for some gentle complaining when Merrill directed us to pair off and to act debauched and amorous in the third act of *Samson*, but mostly we bantered and banded together.

I was not long "in the biz" before I decided that I had to take voice lessons. Every chorister did, and I felt that I was well off the pace, musically speaking. I was frankly uncertain where in my body I was supposed to be producing all of these well-made sounds, or how I was suppose to breathe. I attempted to sing high notes above middle C by stabbing at them with my upper body, and I suspected that this was not an accepted singing technique. Since I had never had a voice lesson of any sort, I concluded that there was little profit in systematically seeking out the best voice teacher in the city, and I therefore opened the yellow pages to Music Instruction. I hired the first teacher I called, a fair-skinned woman in her forties who operated the Bel Canto Studio on the edge of downtown Denver. Because of the studio's name, visions of the singing lesson in *Barbiere di Siviglia*, complete with sopranos in starched crinoline dresses and lecherous bassi, filled my head and perhaps influenced my selection of a teacher.

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Kerri Smith, a sprightly redhead in Group F, told me that her first two months with a voice teacher were spent just trying to correct her speaking voice. But I progressed immediately to breathing lessons (relax the stomach muscles and sigh, I was told) and a series of scales and arpeggios in "ung," "ye," "yo," and other hum-like sounds intended to assist me in vibrating my palate without nasalizing. I did not ask how I was expected to sing French lyrics, with their highly nasalized sounds, without using my nose. I did learn, however, that singers do not sing in the throat. Twice a week for thirty minutes each, I trained with my teacher, gradually acquiring the self-confidence and vocal cord strength to sing louder, more operatically. When I cursed my off-key singing, my teacher would tell me sternly that I was singing on pitch and that she alone would be the judge of my ability.

At last the chorus met a conductor. Janos Acs, a Hungarian living in Milan, was to conduct *Manon Lescaut*. Acs had never before conducted in this country. Merrill introduced the maestro to the chorus and artists one evening while we were still rehearsing in the country day school gymnasium. The conductor was young, with a shock of long hair, a bushy beard, and gangling arms. He invariably wore a blousy blue shirt with gathered sleeves that looked like it had come from the wardrobe selection for *La Bohème*. His English was not extensive. "Thank you very much," "is not correct," "is good," "good evening" (spoken even in mid-afternoon on the weekends), and "you must feel here" while thumping his chest were his most frequent expressions. Maestro Acs, it quickly became apparent, had an outstanding knowledge of Puccini's third opera (and first big hit) and a lyrical conception of how it should be performed, replete with light humor and difficult ritards. He had trouble communicating his ideas to the chorus, however. To the Romanian tenor and Milanese soprano, and to the Merrills, he spoke in a clipped Italian, the lingua franca of opera, which relied heavily on a handful of action verbs—"let's start," "let's do," "let's repeat." For several rehearsals, Maestro Acs seemed depressed by his inability to communicate his romantic vision, as he conducted a solitary pianist with florid, but often obscure, gestures.

Maestro Emerson Buckley, on the other hand, who was to conduct *Samson*, was anything but a romantic. Buckley, who was Pavarotti's regular conductor, was perhaps eighty years old; he hobbled with a cane and sat upright on a stool to conduct. Merrill introduced him to us at a "musical ensemble," the first unstaged performance of the opera with soloists, as "our old friend." Buckley obviously loved the Saint-Saëns opera as a showpiece, but smiled at some of its lyrics. Not one to embarrass an artist in front of the chorus, he whispered crisp suggestions to the soloists, who sat in the first row of folding chairs. The chorus sat

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behind them in a massive semi-circle. Stephen West, a fine local bass-baritone singing the role of Abimelech, had to get up and approach Buckley to hear his quiet remarks.

Buckley's cues for the chorus and soloists were clearly understandable, even to a novice like me. A finger pointed toward heaven meant that the chorus had an entrance in one measure and had better get ready. A crisp flick of the wrist and clenched hand meant to cut off the sound quickly. To get more volume from the chorus, Maestro Buckley would lean his upper body forward and pull it from us with his forearms. Fifteen years before, half standing in a fifth-ring box in the Vienna Staatsoper, I had seen the great conductor Karl Boehm, then quite elderly, energetically conducting an opening-night performance of *Der Freischütz,* the German national opera, from a stool. Buckley, an old pro, reminded me of Boehm, and the chorus sounded good at that first ensemble. I had the feeling that I was participating in a great tradition.

On April 23, we rehearsed for the first time at Boettcher Hall, and on the following night we moved to the "big stage." Set designers, prop men, and lighting technicians, whom we had not previously encountered, tinkered away at their respective crafts while most of the rest of us sang. The chorus was having genuine difficulty with the concertante in the third act of *Manon Lescaut,* and Louise Sherman and Maestro Acs rehearsed that portion of the act at every opportunity. Composed for six or seven choral parts, the concertante required a handful of basses, including me, to sing some lines in full earshot of the audience. Because the entrances were tricky, some of us held back. "Have courage, basses," Louise implored us at one hastily scheduled rehearsal in the women's dressing room theater. Music preparation seemed to follow the push-pull philosophy. Sometimes Louise would slap our wrists or question our dedication. At other times she praised us so effusively that it was difficult not to doubt her sincerity.

Merrill, meanwhile, was adjusting the staging by adding children and animals to the Puccini opera. I decided that Layne Volpe, a freckle-nosed girl who played, among other roles, the hairdresser's assistant in *Manon,* was the most beautiful child I had ever seen. Only five weeks before, Merrill had begun explaining the plots of the operas to a generally confused chorus. Now he confided that the carriage which was to bring Manon and the other *eleganti* to the village of Amiens in the first act would in fact be drawn by horses.

"We believe that this will be the first time live horses have appeared on a stage in Denver," he said, with a strong sense of history.

Merrill and a team of animal trainers slowly introduced the horses to their roles. First they walked the beasts across the stage with the stage lights off and no artists or chorus present. Then the lights were turned on

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for a second walk-through. Finally, performers, music, and gentle applause were added in order. Merrill's anticipation of a wild audience reaction to the carriage was undaunted when, at the first rehearsal, one of the horses unexpectedly loosed a torrent of pent-up body fluids onto the Great Plaza at Amiens. The director cooly ignored the incident, but the chorus swapped scatological jokes for several days afterward.

During early rehearsals at Boettcher Hall, the stage manager periodically pulled people off the stage for costume fittings. My head circumference, inseam, shoe size, and other critical measurements had been taken soon after my arrival as a chorister, but six weeks had proved insufficient for the wardrobe department to fill its order for my *Manon* costume. Seven days before opening night, the wardrobe mistress went to her racks and pulled down the last unassigned male costume of any sort. It was the young *borghese* outfit of a fellow named Johnson, who, she said, had been kicked out of the chorus. For costuming purposes, henceforth I would be Johnson.

"Let's hope it fits," she said wearily, directing me to a dressing room. I noticed that the order card attached to Johnson's wool outer coat implored the costume company to "send anything" and, because I am roughly the size of a pro football wide receiver, I began to think of legitimate theatrical reasons why I should be dressed in undersized clothing. Fortunately, my predecessor had been a large man, and the company's costume rental agreement permitted Opera Colorado to take in and let out with impunity. The ruffled shirt and jacket fit, and when a seamstress took four inches out of both my waistcoat and my trousers, I was ready to go.

Three hundred invited guests attended the first dress rehearsal of *Manon Lescaut*. The maestro was displeased with the orchestra and chorus, and he had to prompt the soprano. He repeated entire scenes, to the evident boredom of some audience members, who departed early. Never having sung before to an audience, I was nervous. The first act went well, but immediately after my third-act entrance, I found myself singing two or three notes ahead of the rest of my group. I apologized to a fellow chorister who changed stage positions presumably to avoid being thrown off her cues. By the end of the night, the nerves were gone. My singing began to reflect some of the vocal techniques my voice teacher had taught me on Monday and Thursday mornings. I remembered to extend my abdomen muscles to breathe, to tighten them before singing—Louise Sherman and her assistants called this "support"—and to continue to support particularly when singing in the upper half of my register. Occasionally I had the impression that I was producing sounds in the back of a domed palate, and I tried to make those sounds "darker" by shaping my mouth into an O instead of constricting the throat. I

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worked very hard on technique, but mostly I concentrated on entrances and tried to stay on pitch.

The men's dressing room at Boettcher Hall had become my second home. It was the portion of the concert hall to which I returned between stage appearances. By the final dress rehearsal for *Manon*, I was counting my minutes on stage. In the Italian opera, they totaled twenty-three at most. It was then that I first experienced entr'acte boredom. Other choristers were apparently used to the long waits between calls to the stage. Some read or dozed quietly in overstuffed armchairs in the makeshift spaces behind long racks of alphabetized costumes. Others, more obsessed with the star syndrome, adjusted their makeup or costumes. Mostly, however, choristers bellowed wisecracks or interrupted each other with fervent non sequiturs. Long tables filled the rest of the room. They were demarked at three-foot intervals with masking tape bearing, in order, the male choristers' last names. With an independence characteristic of aspiring artists, the choristers ignored their assigned seating and deposited clothing and other personal articles wherever they chose. I brought dark beer to several performances in order to pass the time more pleasurably. I vowed that, if I ever returned to the Opera Colorado chorus, my next objective would be to get more stage time.

Finally, while rehearsals of *Samson* continued, *Manon Lescaut* opened. When I arrived at the theater at 6:30 P.M. on opening night, uniformed ushers were lounging just inside the stage door for the first time, and the gaggle of assistants to the conductors, director, and stage manager, who had previously sported jeans and sweatshirts, were now attired in black tie. Some of the men wore left-ear diamond stick pins. Louise Sherman was roundly wolf whistled when she appeared in the women's dressing room at 7:45 P.M., wearing a chic sequined blue dress, to lead a quick rehearsal of some troublesome choral bits. A short series of assistants entered, thanked the chorus, and told us we were great—part of the pumping-up process I assumed to be central to the performing arts. "Go out and have fun," Louise told us, before Merrill put in a brief appearance to express well wishes. Then Maestro Acs, looking quite odd in a tuxedo and western string tie, was introduced and punctured slightly the mood being constructed.

"Remember," he said to the chorus, half reading from prepared words written out in English on a cheat sheet, "you are protagonists in this opera, and you play different characters in each act. Express the joy of the village in act 1. Comment on the horror of act 3 like a Greek chorus."

Then, rather distantly, he said, "And always recall it is a privilege to make music for others. You must work harder to achieve the composer's vision. *In bocca lupo!*" He waved once with his long arm and was gone.

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The stage manager called the chorus to the pit over the intercom, and the orchestra, which had begun rehearsals only six days before, launched into the opening bars of the score. "Group No. 1, go!" shouted an assistant assigned to the chorus in the pit, separated by baffles from the orchestra. Choristers dressed as students went up the stairs to the stage. I entered up the one o'clock stairs with another chorister just before the poet sang, pretended to look around at the evening sky, took in the formally dressed audience that filled 90 percent of the house, ambled down the road toward a gate to the village, and exited at two o'clock. Merrill's staging had another chorister and me then re-enter through a tavern at two-thirty, wait for a group ahead of us to descend from the circular stairs to the street, and then join them quickly to await the arrival of the coach from Arras. While waiting, we were expected to express mature amusement at the antics of the two tenors. Before long, I heard the chorus tenors sing "gioventu," I counted three beats of the conductor's arm beginning with "*-tu,*" and I boomed out my first line, "Date il labbro, date il core alla balda gioventu," which I directed to the first row of the parquet section, about six feet away. A woman near the end of that row turned to listen to me—it is quite likely that she was startled by the proximity of my voice—and smiled.

I felt good throughout my first appearance on stage. The first act was easy to sing, with almost nothing at less than *forte* volume—it was when singing *piano* that I felt most insecure—and there were plenty of opportunities for stage business. I left the stage when the coach departed, after nine minutes in front of the audience, and returned to the dressing room.

The first and second acts were played out, quite well it seemed, in *pianissimo* over a dressing room speaker before gun shots and cries of alarm in the middle of the third act sent me back onto the stage. This time, I was supposed to express the puzzlement of the good citizens of Le Havre at being awakened at 6:00 A.M. "Che fu?" I mouthed, shrugging my shoulders, while the sopranos sang under the stage. "What the hell happened?" whispered Vince Zamora, a genuine Italian.

Finally, the altos screamed and, together with the other basses, I came in with "Udiste? Che fu?" exactly an octave lower, singing once again mostly to the parquet. I liked this bit. It gave me the chance to sing "La folta tenebra protessi la gui" in about one second, an accomplishment that no one in the audience quite appreciated, but I knew what lay behind it. Then there was a drumroll, the women choristers sang "Silenzio," and we all chimed in with "They're beginning the roll call already" in Italian. One at a time, the super whores crossed the stage, the baritone Sergeant calling out their names in a uniform B-flat. "Ro-set-ta . . . Mad-el-on . . . Ma-non."

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Before the third act of every performance of *Manon*, at an upright piano in the women's dressing room, Louise would drill us on this scene. The entrances were tricky, the maestro conducted the scene differently each night, and it was nearly impossible to hear other choristers singing the same parts. Partly on account of the intricacy of the music, and partly on account of the chorus master's constant repetition, many of us suffered self-confidence crises. Twice in rehearsal Louise had urged us on by criticizing one recorded version of the scene. Her least-obscene description of it was "mush." That night we got through the scene well enough, although I am not certain that my harmonic laughter at the end of it ever expressed the irony the maestro was aiming for.

My last words in this opera came after Moldoveanu drew his sword on the Sergeant and before he walked on his knees to plead to remain with the soprano. The super soldiers came to battle-ready positions, the tenors and basses loyal to Manon's brother—the "Lescaut Men"—ran across the stage, Moldoveanu and the Sergeant exchanged a few words in the confusion, and the rest of the male choristers were expected to express their sympathy for the tenor's grand gesture by singing a crisp "Corragio!" At the second dress rehearsal, realizing that few of us could actually hear the tenor and baritone's lines, Louise advised us to cue on a change in tempo following "Marciate!" and to count six beats before entering with "Corragio!" Michael Di Nuova told me that he just counted six beats of the conductor's arm on the nearest monitor. Since I had been coming in late with my line in rehearsals, I decided to follow Michael's system on opening night. When the tempo changed following "Marciate!" I watched Maestro Acs's arm cut the air vertically and horizontally three times each before singing a perfectly placed, well-punctuated, *forte* "Corragio!" Oddly, no one else seemed to be singing. Exactly one beat later I heard the same line being sung at great volume. The blood drained from my face, and I cursed silently, convinced that somewhere in the audience Louise was taking notes. I wondered whether I would be permitted to return the next season. "No soloists," we had been told repeatedly when the chorus was not blending.

My self-flagellation was unnecessary, however, for it was later reported that at least four groups of choristers had sung "Corragio!" at different times, and of course the audience had not seemed to care. Maestro Buckley had urged us once to "get off a note early, rather than sing the next one late," if we had to breathe in the middle of a line. I decided that his advice was sound and could be generalized. In moments of uncertainty, however regrettable it might be not to be singing the composer's music, it was better to be silent than to stand out in a crowd.

The reviews of our opening night were mixed. The *Rocky Mountain News* praised the entire production indiscriminately, but a companion

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article in the same paper, in the entertainment section even, leadenly named some of the socialites who had been spotted in the lobby. The *Post*'s critic wished he could have rewritten Puccini's libretto, and he expressed the hope that Acs would hold the orchestra and chorus together more effectively in later performances. But he gave the soloists high marks. On the afternoon that the reviews appeared, a woman stepped into an elevator I was occupying and said, "I saw you sing on Saturday night." Thus I experienced with strangers the notoriety of a public personality.

Meanwhile, the *Samson* rehearsals were drawing to a close. Fifteen hundred persons attended the final dress rehearsal of that show and swooned when the thirty-four-foot temple columns collapsed hydraulically amid electronic thunder at the end of the opera. I had the feeling that Merrill and his technical staff were flirting with Franco Zeffirelli. Two days earlier I had doubted that the production would come together in time, but now it seemed to be working. The soloists mostly sang in full voice. Vickers, who had earlier complained openly about the hall acoustics and offered restaging suggestions, seemed more satisfied now that some of the seats were filled. Cortez clowned for the audience, at one point chomping on an apple while taking her second-act bows.

The chorus was immense in size, but Maestro Buckley wanted still more sound out of us in spots. A television monitor was installed in the back of the pit so he could conduct us in our off-stage singing at the start of the third act. In the final staging, however, Merrill put half of the chorus on stage in non-singing roles, and the baffles at the back of the pit kept Buckley from hearing those of us who were left. At the last dress rehearsal, as choristers were being pulled from the pit to try on late-arriving costumes, Buckley tried to encourage the chorus to produce yet more volume. Looking directly into the television camera he gave us a two-beat flap of the hands. When that failed, he extended an index finger toward the ceiling and wiggled it, but it was no use. We could not sing louder. Finally, in desperation, he reached into the camera and extended his two middle fingers straight up. This street gesture made us laugh and destroyed any possibility of increasing the sound. Two days later, passages that Saint-Saëns had marked *piano* were being sung at triple *forte*, and the basement had been miked. By then there was so much noise in the pit that I had to cup my hand over one ear to confirm that I was singing on pitch.

Samson opened on Saturday night to wild acclaim. The opera was clearly a great piece of theater and at least a good musical composition. Despite some dryness, Vickers's voice was magnificent, and he was ably supported by the other principals. In the first act, as an enslaved Hebrew, I got to slide out of the great tenor's way during his second aria,

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while he sang of Moses parting the Red Sea. I played a drunken Philistine in the third act, when I pushed Vickers at one point and joined with the others in ridiculing him. On the whole, I preferred being a Philistine. Viorica Cortez and Frederick Burchinal sang a duet in the third act that would have knocked my socks off had I been wearing any under my uncomfortable sandals.

Seconds after being theatrically crushed to death, I got up, pushed a tray of waxed fruit away from the temple altar steps, and held out a hand to Miss Cortez so she could descend to the stage for her bows. There was a prolonged standing ovation, and Merrill invited the key backstage persons to join us on stage. Leslie, our dresser, beamed. Soloists, chorus, underclothed ballet dancers, Merrill, Sherman, production staff, and a small boy who had led the blind Samson to the marble pillars bowed in four directions. Two days later the *Post*'s critic, who did not find fault with Saint-Saëns's libretto, said that the quality of the Opera Colorado chorus was the second reason (after Vickers's voice and dramatic sense) why *Samson* was a must-see. The *Christian Science Monitor* reported that the Opera Colorado chorus was one of the best in the world.

Our final performance of *Manon Lescaut* took place the afternoon after *Samson* opened. Again, Maestro Acs interrupted the chorus's warm-up in the women's dressing room to speak with us. Once again, he abandoned his prepared remarks.

"Twenty years ago," he said, "when I was small boy outside Budapest, I was in children's *chor*. One year, the great Italian tenor Mario del Monaco come to Budapest and perform in *Samson et Dalila*, *Tosca*, and *Rigoletto*. I attend his performances, and it was one of the great experiences of my life."

"Last night," he continued, "you sang with the greatest Samson of our time. And you sang with a very good Delilah. It is a great experience for you too. But today," he added, dropping the other shoe, "you must come back from Palestine to the small village of Amiens. You must come back to Puccini. Be lyrical. Be joyous. Feel it here," he said, touching his sternum. Then, more philosophically, he said, "There is much disappointment in life. But in the end, what sustains us? It is music that sustains us, and a little bit of fate. It is so. Good luck, and thank you."

He flashed a nervous smile and waved, but before Acs could leave, Mary Ellen Honsaker, a wildlife artist who had been a chorus member for several years, presented him with a parting gift on behalf of the group. It was a framed pen-and-ink drawing she had made the night before of a baying wolf, a peculiarly American response to his European opening-night wish of luck to us, "*In bocca lupo!*" Acs thanked Louise Sherman and kissed her on both cheeks, his recently trimmed hair dropping gently over his forehead, but the chorus director gestured at us

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and said, "It's them." The chorus applauded Acs, hands over head, European style. It was all very moving, and I am pleased that our last performance of *Manon* that day was our best.

When it was over and my makeup was off, Acs signed my Opera Colorado poster "Viva Puccini!" followed by his name, last name first, and departed. After Moldoveanu had changed into a trim Milanese double-breasted suit, I asked him in Italian to autograph my poster and told him in English that I thought he had been perfect in the role of Des Grieux. I said that it had been a pleasure for me to have sung with him. He just smiled. Perhaps my choice of verb tenses had been too complex for him. More likely his supply of theatrical pleasantries was temporarily exhausted. Josella Ligi, who had sung Manon, autographed my poster with an inscription in Italian that to this day I find illegible. Viorica Cortez stopped by the dressing room area with her own red marker in hand and signed her name across Delilah's arm—"my arm," she said—in the Beardsley-like graphic dominating the poster. "It's a good arm," I told her.

After that, the season began to wind down. We had a free day on Monday, our first in weeks, before our second performance of *Samson*. Two more free days followed. The performances themselves became automatic, without problems more significant than dry ice flare-ups and obscured television monitors. ("No more 'Coraggios,'" I told a chorus member when she asked me how it was going.) Vickers's tensions subsided, and he was in increasingly good voice. Stephen West, perhaps reacting to one critic's cavil that he looked "stiff" as the heavy Abimelech, menaced the Hebrews at succeeding performances with the enthusiasm of a melodrama performer. Choral warm-ups emphasized vocal expression rather than entrances. Like many other choristers, I brought my camera to the third performance of *Samson* and exposed three quick rolls of film to greasepaint and jockey shorts, dancers' flexed feet and bare cheeks, heaped props, lacquered hair, intent librarians, musicians in black tie drinking canned orange juice, Hebrew warriors making telephone calls, and other scenes of backstage life.

On stage, I tried varying my performance slightly, sometimes singing to a different portion of the hall, increasing the resonance of my first-act lament, or mugging emphatically in the last act to heighten the audience's pity for the blind hero. I was only one of 150 performers on stage, but I came to feel that it was my personal responsibility to make my small section of the stage visually and musically interesting for the audience.

Once again, the final performance, a Sunday matinee, was our best. Even the partial-view seats were filled that day, the production having grabbed the city's attention, for a week at least, like the annual mid-

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winter stock show or the September turning of the aspen. A resident of my apartment building who had been to opening night insisted that her elderly mother and sister-in-law, who were visiting from Montreal, attend the matinee. They joined an audience that gave the artists ovations at all the right places; and when the opera ended, three-fourths of the patrons stood and lingered in the auditorium even when the houselights came up and Merrill droned into a microphone about the company's history. Having lingered in opera houses more than once myself, I recognized the telltale sign of audience participation in larger-than-life experiences.

"Chorus and supers," Merrill finally confided, "you may take a rock home as a souvenir." Spray-painted polyurethane remnants of the Great Temple at Gaza, which had been dropped from black plastic garbage bags in the sky, littered the stage for the last time. I picked up a couple of khaki-colored stones for myself and, like a baseball player who has just fielded a foul ball away from the play, flipped a few into the parquet.

And then the general director was next to me on stage, telling me that with my acting I had drawn everyone's attention in the third act. He thanked me personally for "making it great" and signed my opera poster "Welcome to Opera Colorado." I was stunned and proud.

I took my time that day showering in a dark stall in the men's dressing room to remove most of my body paint. A production assistant came in to dismantle a large board to which the *Manon* hairpieces had been attached. Leslie was racking the *Samson* costumes for return to the costumer in Toronto. The last of the male dancers deposited his gold dance belt and left. By the time I had put on street clothes and reached the stage door, a large hand-lettered sign next to the door announced that any personal articles left in the dressing rooms would be discarded the following day. The doorman, who for three weeks had checked our stage passes, thereby legitimizing our status as performers, was gone.

Late in the run of *Samson,* Emerson Buckley had told me that, after a two-week vacation in Italy, he was traveling to Buenos Aires to conduct Pavarotti in a series of concerts and operas at the Teatro Colon. Fred Burchinel, who had sung the High Priest, was scheduled to sing *Pagliacci* with the New York City Opera next. And Kevin Langan, who had sung the role of the Old Hebrew with a rich bass timbre, was moving on to Santa Fe for summer performances of *Nozze di Figaro* and Handel's *Ariodante.*

As I left through the stage door, even though I was not heading for an out-of-town engagement, I knew I was hooked. Three days later, screwing up my courage once again, I used one of Langan's arias from the first act of *Samson* to audition for the Denver Symphony Orchestra chorus.

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Circle

E. B. DE VITO

We should have been born old
and then grow young,
your father used to say—
live life not aging,
only youthening.

Perhaps in a way, we always do
in a life that Van der Post said
"begins as a quest of the child for the man
and ends as a journey by the man
to rediscover the child."

Our journeys, meant to spiral,
somehow turn out circular,
as all the elements conspire
to send us off
to wild uncharted waters,
tangentially in off-course
and circuitous routes,
and yet we find
in some unseeable way,
each makes a Magellan
voyage to himself.

E. B. DE VITO's poems have appeared in *The New Yorker, Saturday Evening Post, Commonweal,* and other magazines.

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IN MEMORIAM

Remembering Arnaldo

PETER BROWN

It was thirty years ago, in 1957, that I was first introduced to Arnaldo Momigliano, as a potential supervisor of my thesis on late Roman history. He was, at that time, some three years younger than I am now. He had behind him, he wrote then, "twenty-five years of study, at a time, indeed, of wars, of persecutions and of irreparable personal loss."

He was already the stuff of legends. Stories abounded in Oxford and London—some awestruck, many, quite frankly, trivial and trivializing. None of the local gossip had prepared me in the slightest for the experience of being taken into Arnaldo's trust. This was a trust offered wordlessly and unstintingly, from a loyal and lucid mind. It hung above the narrow cares of a group of young scholars as weightless but as clear as the falling rays of the evening star above low clouds. In Arnaldo we had somehow gained not a mentor, still less a father figure, but a vivid playmate.

The offprints that followed, with humbling regularity, revealed just how serious that play must be. Like a splendid fountain, Arnaldo's work rose and fell in a seemingly endless sequence of configurations: there was no telling when a new column might soar upwards, from the inexhaustible spring of a mind for whom nothing in the intellectual history of Europe seemed alien or devoid of potential interest to the committed student of the ancient world. The miraculous diversity of the man both stunned us and gave us the courage to continue.

I like to think now of Arnaldo in terms of the incalculable multiplication, over thirty years, in England, Italy, and America, of his effect on myself and those who knew him in those years in London and Oxford. Just to recall to mind how many aspects of the past, how many friends and scholars in the present have been touched by that boundless zest and heartened by his unforgettable smile quite swamps the mind: it is to breathe in, with joy and thankfulness, the warm, intoxicating scent of a spreading field brought to full flower.

The memory of so much abundance, experienced in a different manner by each of us, is what consoles us now in our personal loss of Arnaldo as a guide and friend. But what I would wish to bring back to memory on this occasion, rather, is the unity of the man. So huge an openness and such capacity to embrace the perilous diversity of European culture always struck me as possible only in a man of rock-like certainty, endowed with a magnificently unfissured heart.

Put very briefly: Arnaldo was proud to share with George Grote, on whom he wrote so warmly in 1952, "the all-redeeming virtue of the liberal mind." A fierce commitment to freedom and truth drove him throughout his scholarly life. Rooted in the culture of the liberal, secularized Judaism of Piedmont, which had contributed so decisively to the creation of a modern Italy, he explained his work as an ancient historian with justifiable pride, in connection with "the triple tradition—Jewish, classical and Christian—that I inherited as a Jew and an Italian."

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The above essay was originally given as part of a memorial service at the University of Chicago in October 1987, to commemorate the death of the distinguished historian, Arnaldo Momigliano.

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This was a complex tradition, not devoid of tragic inconsistencies and of manifold occasions for betrayal. Arnaldo held to what he considered to be its central, sovereign values with characteristic tenacity. He registered with unclouded lucidity the forces that menaced, and had once attempted to destroy, these values, in the realm of modern scholarship of the ancient world, as in so much else. This must never be forgotten. No man alive could speak with such infectious joy and with such frank curiosity and mischievous ease, as did Arnaldo, when he exercised himself in what he once described as "this immemorial tradition, this long-standing delight, of talking to past historians as if they were our senior colleagues."

Yet he never did so without an urgent sense of the need to establish the primary value of truth in history and its corollary, the freedom of dissent that made the establishment of such truth possible. It is now almost beyond our powers to delineate exactly the inextricable intertwining of his scholarship, as it came to range throughout the whole intellectual history of Europe and embraced, with iron determination, the separate histories of Greece, Rome, Judaism, and Christianity in the ancient world. But that great arbor grew from those two, strong roots.

We cannot, for instance, read the limpid pages that Arnaldo wrote on the conflicts over the nature and status of historical truth in ancient and modern historiography without being gripped, once again, by his unpacifiable sense of urgency. Truth was the highest god; but truth can slip so easily from human hands—and with irreparable results. In *Alien Wisdom*, in many ways his most joyful book, but the one dedicated to the memory of his mother, murdered in a concentration camp, and accompanied by the two most terrible verses in the whole book of Psalms, he wrote: "I am not sure that one can calculate the consequences of being fed on forgeries."

A warm soul, poignantly alive to the human need for integrity, Arnaldo touched frequently on the religious life of the ancient world. He recognized in Judaism and Christianity movements that could mobilize all levels of society and engage every level of the human being. Some of his most lucid and persistent insights—ones to which I owe the direction of my own work, from end to end—concerned the role of Judaism and of the Christian church in the Roman world. He judged and found wanting the three greatest syntheses produced by ancient historians in our time—Michael Rostovtzeff's *Roman Empire* and *Hellenistic World*, Ronald Syme's *Roman Revolution*, and Hugo Jones's *Later Roman Empire*—because he felt that they overlooked that all-important residuum of human motivation. He could come close to what Flavius Josephus did not see: "the joy in the Law, the sense of a disciplined collective life, the concern and love for the younger generations and the trust in God" that characterized the rabbis of the Roman period. "But we should have no doubt about it: in its turn the liberal mind is religious in examining the evidence." Truth admitted no appeal and no extenuating circumstances: "One is never simple-minded enough about forgeries [he wrote last year]. Pious frauds are frauds, for which one must show no piety—and no pity."

To maintain truth in historical studies was Arnaldo's life. It was how, I think, he would wish best to be remembered. We can part from him, seeing him now, as, fifty years ago, he glimpsed his own, beloved master, Gaetano de Sanctis, standing beside Benedetto Croce on the steps of the university library of Turin: "two men so similar [he wrote] in the uninterrupted passion for knowledge and love of liberty, and in the sovereign intelligence that glittered in their eyes." Or, again, we can use his own words concerning a figure better known to us in the English-speaking world, the astonishing exile Michael Rostovtzeff; we "will always cherish the memory of a courageous and honest historian to whom civilization meant creative liberty."

And we can add of Arnaldo, as he did then, "Those who have known him have known greatness."

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Budapest 1900

Colors, Words, Sounds

JOHN LUKACS

On the night of the first of May in 1900 Mihály Munkácsy, the Hungarian painter, died in a private sanatorium in Germany. He was buried nine days later in Budapest. His funeral—like that of Victor Hugo in Paris fifteen years before, on another day in May—"was not to be the obsequies of a dead man," as Joan Richardson wrote in her biography of Hugo. "It was to be the celebration of an immortal. The nineteenth century was to enter into history with the man who had echoed its enthusiasms and its passions."

The catafalque rose on Heroes' Square in Budapest (Victor Hugo's body had lain in state under the Arc de Triomphe), before the six Corinthian columns and the neoclassical peristyle of the Hall of Arts. Munkácsy's sarcophagus was designed, and built in haste, by a well-known Hungarian sculptor; the catafalque, forty-five feet high, by a famous Hungarian architect, an apostle of Magyar modernism. This was odd, because there was nothing very Magyar or modern in these designs. The sarcophagus was white, the catafalque velvet-black. Two enormous masts, draped with black flags, were crowned by white-painted laurel wreaths. There was a double row of topiary standards with their black-green leaves. Amid these cascades of blackness there was a large white bas-relief in the lower center of the bier, with Munkácsy's profile in a gilded frame. Four bronze torches flamed and smoked around the catafalque. It was a cool, windy day in May.

There was one element of an asymmetrical and Hungarian panache above this monumental funeral mise-en-scène: a huge black veil, draped on one side from the attic peak of the Hall of Arts, sweeping down in a half circle. It suggested something like a great national actress in the act of mourning.

There was the national government and the municipality of Budapest: ministers and the mayor, black-coated, top-hatted. There were bishops, hussars, heralds in German Renaissance costumes, riders holding tall silver staves with black lanterns affixed to them. At half past three, the funeral procession began to move: the hearse (decorated, too, in medieval style) drawn by six black-blanketed, silver-caparisoned horses, and eight carriages packed high with wreaths.

The noise of the city died down. On the Pest side the trolley cars had stopped. Black flags flew. The procession wended westward, onto the broad expanse of Andrássy Avenue. At that moment the sounds of the murmur and of the music were overtaken by the loud clip-clopping of the horses' hooves, because Andrássy Avenue was paved with hardwood blocks. The minister of culture and religion had ordered the schools closed for the day; the students were directed to line the streets along the funeral route. The great procession flowed down that avenue, the pride of Pest, past the villas and the wrought-iron railings before the homes of the newly rich, the May greenery, and the young horse chestnuts.

At Octagon Square, a mile and a half down

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Andrássy Avenue, a trumpeter halted the march to direct the procession leftward, to the Ring. The bishops and the ministers stepped into their carriages. Stiff in black stood the carpenters' and the housepainters' guild, and the choral society of a factory sent the bass of their threnody up into the afternoon sky. On the second story balcony of No. 44 Elizabeth Ring stood a small white-bearded figure, the grand old man of Hungarian literature, Mór Jókai. He lifted his hat. A mile down the Ring, then another turn onto Rákóczi Avenue, toward the city cemetery. By that time the crowd was dispersing in the violaceous twilight.

The lights were coming on along the boulevards of Budapest. In their shadows the vinous nightlife of the city sprang to life, with its raucous, vinegary sounds filling the gaps of the night air. There was the sense of an odd holiday just past, of a mourning after. Again there was a curious parallel with that day in Paris fifteen years before, when the British ambassador wrote to Queen Victoria that "there was nothing striking, splendid or appropriate either in the monstrous catafalque erected under the Arc de Triomphe, or in the trappings of the funeral. There was nothing mournful or solemn in the demeanour of the people."

This was the second time in six years that such a giant funeral had taken place in Budapest. In March 1894 the body of the great exile, the national leader Lajos Kossuth, had been brought home. Kossuth and Munkácsy had been the two most famous Hungarians known abroad. Hungarians knew that. It was one of the reasons, perhaps the main reason, for Munkácsy's apotheosis: the honor Hungary gained through his reputation in the world.

Munkácsy's path was the path of a comet. He was born in 1844, of German-Hungarian parents, in a dusty, backward town in northeastern Hungary. His early life was sad. His parents died when he was a child. The orphan became a carpenter's apprentice. During his adolescence he showed a talent for drawing. A sympathetic painter took him on as a companion. He went up to Pest, then to Vienna, then to Munich and Düsseldorf, where he made some kind of a living from sketching but failed to make an impression either on his painter companions or on his occasional teachers. Then came the turning point. In 1868 he painted a large canvas, *Siralomház*, "The Last Night of a Condemned Prisoner." A Hungarian brigand, in peasant dress, sits and leans against a table, surrounded by shadowy figures in anxious grief. The background is dark, the brush strokes strong, naturalistic, showing considerable talent in composition and in the art of contrast; the style is reminiscent of Courbet. It was an instant success. One of the earliest American private collectors, the Philadelphia merchant William P. Wilstach, bought it for two thousand gold talers. Munkácsy was not yet twenty-six years old.

In 1870 this painting was shown in the Paris Salon. It earned the Gold Medal and celebrity for its painter. Munkácsy moved to Paris. He married the widow of a baron. Mme Munkácsy had social ambitions. They had a palace built on the Avenue Villiers. Cabinet members, artists, ambassadors, Russian dukes, and the King of Sweden came to their dinners. Munkácsy had dark eyes and a beautifully kept beard; there was a suggestion of an elegant bohemian in the lavallière cravat that he habitually wore. "Dieu, qu'il est beau!" a Parisian woman said. Sedlmayer, a powerful art dealer from Munich, became Munkácsy's agent—his factotum really. He kept telling Munkácsy what to paint. More than sixty of Munkácsy's pictures were sold for very large sums, mostly to rich Americans. The buyers included Cornelius and William Vanderbilt, Jay Gould, William Astor, August Belmont, the financial genius Edward T. Stotesbury of Philadelphia, General Russell Alger, who was the governor of Michigan, Joseph Pulitzer, the newspaper magnate, and Lorenzo Delmonico, the New York restaurateur. Munkácsy's most successful enterprise was the large canvas "Christ Before Pilate." The topic had been suggested by Sedlmayer. It was bought by the rising department-store magnate John Wanamaker of Philadelphia for $160,000, the equivalent of two million dollars one hundred years later. It is still exhibited every Easter in Wanamaker's department store. In 1886, Sedlmayer arranged for a triumphal tour by Munkácsy in the United States. President Cleveland received Munkácsy in the White House, the Secretary of the Navy gave him a dinner in Washington, and Delmonico gave him a festive banquet in New York. A gypsy band played a "Munkácsy March" on the New York pier when he boarded the liner *La Champagne* for France.

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His success reverberated in his native country. The Hungarian government commissioned Munkácsy to paint for the new parliament building a monumental canvas—*Honfoglalás*, "The Conquest of Hungary." Árpád, the founder, prime prince of the Hungarian tribes, sits erect on his white stallion, receiving the homage of the inhabitants of the Hungarian hills and plain. It is well beneath the standards of Munkácsy's best work. But he was already a sick man. A disease, probably syphilis, had affected his body and his brain. Few people in Hungary knew that. He was a national hero, a national treasure, the most famous son of Hungary in the world.

A comet: or, rather, a meteor. People speak of a meteoric rise when, in reality, a meteor is marked by its fall. That was the case with poor Munkácsy. He was a self-made painter, an artist of remarkable gifts, with a considerable talent for depth and contrast; but perhaps his best paintings are those surviving ones that are the least known—a few summer landscapes, and a few portraits. We may now see that his canvases are period pieces. At his best, he could approximate the standards of Courbet, perhaps of Millet. But the Munkácsy meteor lit up the Parisian sky only briefly and at the very time—in the 1870s—when the new generation of the Impressionists left the salon well behind. Munkácsy execrated them. Before his death, he wrote his wife that what he would really like was to start an academy "to do away with the exaggerations of Impressionists."

Long before that, the French critics turned away from Munkácsy. Dumas *fils*, who liked him personally, said to his Hungarian friend Zsigmond Justh: "Munkácsy is an inflated reputation who has both profited from his wife and been damaged by her." Huysmans wrote that Munkácsy had a taste for nothing but decor: "le rastaquouère de la peinture," (a dubious adventurer). Others called his house a "palais de poncif," a palace of a hack. Two years before Munkácsy's death, the contents of the house on the Avenue Villiers were auctioned off: the Gobelins, the china, the Persian rugs, the antique guns, and some of his paintings went for almost nothing. A later generation was to find that the very material of his paintings was deteriorating. Munkácsy habitually used a black bitumen ground for his large canvases. That tended to fade his colors with the passing of time.

The pomp and the circumstance of Munkácsy's state funeral obscured all of this; and in the grandiloquence of the Budapest newspapers in May 1900 there was no trace of a reflective tone. But it must not be thought that the recognition of Munkácsy's limitations was the particular reaction of Parisian critics, of a culture five hundred miles to the west and many years ahead of Budapest. As often in the history of Magyar culture, intellect, and art, worldwide fame was one thing, true merit another: and the two would rarely correspond. Years before Munkácsy passed away, painters in Hungary had already rejected the pictorial tradition that he had represented. That tradition—despite Munkácsy's Francophilia and his Paris residence and his Paris successes—was essentially a German, a Munich, one; but by the 1890s the best Hungarian painters had broken away from that. They withdrew, not into bohemian conventicles, but to serious workshops in the country, in Nagybánya, Gödöllő, Szolnok, to open their windows, to go ahead with the Hungarian school of plein-air painting, built up with colors that would not pale. The first exhibition of the Nagybánya painters took place in 1897; and by 1900 modern painting in Hungary had not only begun—it was in full development.

These painters were criticized, indeed, excoriated by some of the conservatives whose bastion was that Hall of Arts from where Munkácsy's body was sent forth on his last journey, but no matter—these painters knew not only what they were doing but where they stood. And sat. In 1900 in Budapest, the painters' and the sculptors' and the architects' habitual coffeehouse was the Japan, on Andrássy Avenue, whose tables bore penciled drawings on their raspberry-color marble surfaces (on one occasion, a respectful art collector cajoled the owner of the coffeehouse into selling him one of those tables, which he then had carted home). The Japan was but a few steps away from where the Munkácsy funeral procession had turned away from Andrássy Avenue, to wend its way to the city cemetery between the grandiose apartment houses of the Ring. Elizabeth Ring—not only its buildings but its atmosphere, its colors, sounds, and the language along its pavements—was typical of Budapest in 1900; but so were, too, the minds and the talk of the people in the Japan. People understood that. What they may not have known was the symbolic duality of that

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day: that Munkácsy and the tremendous pomp of his funeral reflected the tragic grandiloquence of a Hungarian century now definitely and hopelessly past; and that now, in 1900, something more than a new century had begun; that new lights and new shadows began to appear on the canvas of Hungarian minds, and on the stage of the Magyar spirit, with colors hitherto largely unimagined and sounds hitherto largely unheard.

Much of this was agreeably obscured by the continuing, grandiose vitality of the city, with buildings shooting up all over Budapest, a vitality that impressed foreign visitors. Only a few years before 1900, de Blowitz, the most celebrated and most cosmopolitan international journalist in Europe, the chief diplomatic correspondent of the London *Times*, traveled from Vienna to Budapest. "I confess," he wrote in his account in the English journal *The Nineteenth Century*, "that no city in the world holds or interests me less than Vienna. . . . It is, let me say, as a town, merely 'one of a dozen'. . . ."

On the other hand, Buda-Pest has for me an invincible attraction, and when on the morrow—a warm, bright day—I was at last permitted to install myself in the shade high up on one of the balconies of the Hotel Hungaria overlooking the Danube, I experienced one of the most agreeable sensations that I recall. Here the ample breadth of the stream diminishes the force of the current, and the Danube passes majestically under the two imposing bridges which hide its course where it bends far below beyond the town with the dimensions and the appearance of a stream opening out into the sea. In front frowns the ancient and lofty fortress of Buda, which formerly held Hungary abject and trembling under its cannon, and the Burg, formerly Imperial, where watched the implacable eye of the conqueror. Both fortresses and Burg, however, are to disappear for ever. A new royal château is going up near by, which will take the place of the old yellow barracks which serve now as dwelling for the King of Hungary in this capital, finally recovered from the age-long domination of Austria. Below, the life of the river is unceasing; and the whole warm, brilliant, animated picture is most enlivening.

Blowitz's dislike for Vienna was odd. "Every time I return to Vienna," he wrote, "I am struck by the fact that the older it grows the more improvised its appearance." But Budapest was much more improvised. Its antiquities were inconsiderable. It was a swelling, booming city—a Danubian town with rich, unexpected provincial airs, recently raised to the rank of the twin capital of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, of the Dual Empire. A mere one hundred and forty miles apart, the very atmosphere of the two cities was palpably different.

In Budapest, the contrast of the seasons, and of their colors, is sharper than in Vienna. It was surely sharper in 1900, before the age of the omnipresent automobile exhausts and diesel fumes. Violet in Budapest was a spring color. It was the custom to present tiny bouquets of the first violets to women as early as March. The violets came from the market gardens south and west of the city, sold by peasant women along the Corso and in the streets. In March, too, came the sound and the smell of the rising river. The Danube ran swifter and higher in Budapest than in Vienna. It would often flood the lower quays; and the sound and sight of that swirling mass of water was awesome. By the end of April, a pearly haze would bathe the bend of the river and the bridges and the quays, rising to Castle Hill. That light would endure through the long summer mornings until the mature clarities of late September.

At night the shadows retreated, and a new, dark-green atmosphere spread over the city like a canopy of promise. This was not the acid green springtime of Western and Northern Europe: May and June in Hungary, even in Budapest, have something near-Mediterranean about them. The smoke from the myriads of chimneys retreated with the shadows (except, of course, the high-blown smoke of the mills and factories in the outer districts). The chairs and the tables were put out before the cafés and in the open-air restaurants. It was then that the nocturnal life of Budapest blossomed, a life with singular habits and flavors that began early in the evening and lasted into the dawn, in which so many people partook. There were avenues in Budapest that were more crowded at ten at night than at ten in the morning, but not because they were concentrations of nightlife, such as Montmartre or Piccadilly.

The freshness of the dustless air, especially after the May showers, brought the presence of the Hungarian countryside into the city. Somewhat like parts of London in the eighteenth century (or Philadelphia in the nine-

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teenth), this smoky, swollen, crowded, and metropolitan Budapest was still a city with a country heart, with the sense that a provincial Arcadia was but an arm's length away. By May the violets were gone, but there was a mixture of acacias and lilacs—and of the apricots of which the best in Hungary were grown within the municipal confines of Budapest. There was the sense of erotic promises, earthy and tangible as well as transcendent. It penetrated the hearts of people, and not only of the young; and it was not only a matter of espying the sinuous movements of women, movements more visible now under their light summery frocks. It was a matter of aspirations.

Summer was hot, hotter than in Vienna, even sultry at times, broken by tremendous thunderstorms, but almost never damp. When the dark thunderheads convened high over the dry, dusty streets, they carried the promise of relief and the return of the long pleasant summer evenings, for the evenings were almost always cool. There is not much difference between a May and an August night in Budapest, except of course in the vegetation. Even on the hottest days the trees were green, never sere. Summer was the recurrent feeling, the promise of pleasure in *le bel, le frais, le vivace aujourd'hui;* and a Budapest bourgeoise or a young gentry wife threw open the double-leaved windows and leaned over her geraniums with the same movement—and perhaps, too, with the same movement of the heart—as a Frenchwoman on the Côte d'Azur in summertime circa 1900, a little out of season but *belle, fraîche, vivace* nonetheless. Surrounded by the yellow, powdery Hungarian countryside, Budapest spread along the banks of the Danube like a green bower; or, perhaps (for those who prefer vegetables to flowers) rather like a super-large green cabbage whose outer leaves were edged, here and there, with the black rime of smoke from the factory chimneys. The city, packed with people and rows of apartment houses, gave the impression, and the feeling, of a summer resort—perhaps even that of a spa. Few people complained of the summer in Budapest, except for those who employed it as the pretext to proclaim their departures to vacation places well-known. A profusion of fruit, greenery, and fish spilled out from the markets onto the sidewalks. Young people stayed up late, into the dawn. Older people, daydreaming on hot afternoons, turned their thoughts to the winter season to come, thinking of new flirtations and new quarrels.

Autumn can be a short season in Budapest; in any event, its beauties are unpredictable, like those of rapidly maturing women—or, perhaps, unpredictable like the melancholy of Hungarian men. It is not only that the owl of Minerva flies at dusk; it is that the best writers of Hungary, living in Budapest around 1900, had autumn in their hearts. The instruments of their internal music were not springtime violins, or the summery bravura of the gypsy bands whose music in the summer mixed with the crunch of the gravel and with the clanging of the dishes in the open-air taverns and restaurants. The deepest, the truest sound of Magyar prose is not that of a canting and chanting violin; it is that of a cello.

November is the saddest month in Budapest; a century ago it was the only month when that great bell of clear air over the Hungarian plain became striated with damp fog. The fog swirled around the broad pillars of the Danube bridges, it rose to cloud the high hills of Buda. On All Souls' Day, many thousands of people streamed toward the cemeteries of Budapest with flowers in their hands; that holy day is perhaps taken more seriously in Hungary than elsewhere because of the national temperament. "Temetni tudunk"—a terse Magyar phrase whose translation may require as many as ten English words to give its proper (and, even then, not wholly exact) sense: "How to bury people—that is one thing we know." The greatest tragedies in the history of modern Hungary—the hanging of twelve Hungarian generals after the failure of the War of Independence, in 1849; the collapse of the ancient monarchy at their defeat in the First World War, in 1918; the stillbirth of the deeply divided effort to free Hungary from its deadly alliance with Hitler's Reich, in 1944; the defeat of the great national rising in 1956, centered in Budapest—all of these happened in October or early November. For Budapest in 1900 the last three of these great tragedies were, of course, still unknown.

And then, one morning—it would come as early as the third week of November, and surely before the middle of December—one of two new things would happen. A clear sky would rise over Budapest again, with the pale gold of a winter sun refracted by the crystalline cold. Or, the sky would be gray, with rich, fat flakes of snow coming down all over Bu-

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dapest: a celestial filling, like the goose down in the comforters in its bedrooms. In Budapest, winters came earlier in 1900 than they come now. They were colder and snowier. There were still years (though not in the calendar year 1900) when the entire stretch of the Danube was frozen and adventurous men could walk across the ridges of ice from Pest to Buda. There was a sense of feasting and innocence in the air. Winter in Budapest was not a season of long rest and sleep, as it was in the snow-laden country; it was another season full of promise and excitement. The streets of the Inner City were filled before noon with women and girls parading in their winter finery, and with gentlemen promenading in fur-collared greatcoats. Girls without furs were equipped at least with a furry muff. They were stepping in and out of the confiseries and the flower shops and the glove makers, with tiny packages wrapped in rosy, crinkly paper, hanging daintily from the tips of their little fingers. Among the horse-drawn carriages on the avenues in 1900 there still slid in and out a few sleighs—black-lacquered, with silvered tackle, drawn by black horses, with the laps of their passengers wrapped in ancient fur-lined blankets.

What the city offered was this agreeable and satisfying contrast of exterior ice and interior fire. The diamantine, light blue, crackling cold climate of the streets was only a few steps away from the cozy warmth of the houses and their cosseted bourgeois interiors, with deep-red carpets underfoot and perhaps crimson tongues of fire not only in the grates of the tile stoves but in many hearts. Even in the dark, grimy streets, with their forbidding doorways and freezing entrances, the white snow thick around provided not only a contrast in color but in atmosphere: to gaze inside, to sense the hot interior fug, or to look outside from their cramped interiors into the snowy streets was equally good. The crunch of the snow, its odd chemical smell, the roofs and the windowsills and the shop signs and the monuments of Budapest picked out in white gave the city a secure feeling. Behind those windowsills the housewives patted the long square insulating bolsters into place between the double windows; and the few walkers along the quays or up along the deserted streets and parapet walks on Castle Hill must surely have been lovers.

It was the season of long dinners, of tables heavily laden with roasts, sausages, bacons, fowl, and game sent up to the families from the country; of the smells of wet wool and leather and pastry cream and perfume in the shops of the Inner City; of the anticipations of Christmas, of dancing assemblies and balls; and for the young, of the chance meeting on the rink of the Budapest Skating Club, on the frozen lake in City Park, under electric lights on weekday evenings. When the little blue flag of the club was up at Octagon Square, it meant that the ice was sufficiently hard for the skaters—and for their flirtations, while the girls' chaperons would gossip behind the windows of the clubhouse, which was as warm as an oven, aglow in the dark, like the redness behind the isinglass of a stove, reeking of oiled leather, coal smoke, and the melted ice on the rough floors of the waiting room. It was a city of distinct anticipations and of distinct seasons, more distinct than now.

"Buda-Pest!" wrote Blowitz. "The very word names an idea which is big with the future. It is synonymous with restored liberty, unfolding now at each forward step; it is the future opening up before a growing people." A growing people indeed. Budapest was the fastest growing city in Europe, perhaps in the world. From 1890 to 1900 its population increased by more than 40 percent. In 1900, with 733,000 people, it had become the sixth largest city of Europe, the largest one between Vienna and St. Petersburg. Between 1896 and 1902, two new bridges were thrown across the Danube, one of them the then-largest single-span bridge in the world; the first subway in Europe, ten public monuments, the new Palace of Justice, and the largest parliament building in the world were about to be completed. In more than one way, 1900 represented a zenith in the history of Budapest.

But there were dark shadows under that sun. "They kept on building every day, palaces topped by towers rising toward the sun," wrote the great Hungarian writer Gyula Krúdy, "and at night it was as if there were endless burials. An everlasting row of tumbrils hauled the broken matter out of the town, the cadavers of old people and of old houses, of old streets and old customs."

Beneath the noisy boom of Budapest there was that presence of a wistful and melancholy tone; and there was more to it than the echo of

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nostalgic memories, heard only in solitude and silence in the deep of the night, when the city noise had died down. But that blending of major and minor, of optimism and pessimism, of light and darkness is, after all, *the* inevitable human condition, and also the condition of any culture worthwhile. It is only that some people—and this is true about Hungarians—are more conscious of it than are others. As Pascal said, men are both beasts and angels. Hungarians know that—which is the reason why the fanatic insistence of a Dostoyevski about that duality and about its coexistence in the human soul leaves them, by and large, unmoved: that unkempt Russian tells them nothing that they do not know.

In 1900 not only the colors and the tastes and the sounds but the psychic tones of Budapest and Vienna were very different from each other. Budapest was still full of self-confidence. Its building fever and its financial prosperity were the consequences of that condition. This had much to do with the Magyar temperament, in which a deep-rooted (and non-religious) pessimism is often broken by sudden bursts of appetite for life, of a physical appetite stronger but perhaps less finely woven than what the French phrase "joie de vivre" suggests. The results of this were visible, and palpable, in 1900. Vienna may have been neurotic; Budapest was not. There were plenty of troubles, dissatisfactions, shadows, darknesses in the life of the city; but there was, as yet, no definite desire to break with the past and no self-conscious doubts about the future. Within Magyar pessimism there is the sad music of the futility of human endeavors but none of the Viennese *Angst*: the tone is often melancholy but the appetite for life—including the material pleasures of words, sounds, colors, tastes, and touches—abounds. The Hungarian mind inclines to psychosis rather than to neurosis; but the German idea of the subconscious (as distinct from the unconscious), the idea that something is truer because it is "deeper," has had no appeal to the Hungarian mind—especially when it is expressed in intellectual categories whose very language is removed from the everyday realities of life.

The Hungarian mind is very observant and understanding of every kind of psychic nuance: but it tends to recognize these from expressions of the conscious mind. Long after 1900, Freud's influence on Budapest was very slight. One of the reasons for this is the declarative character of the Hungarian language and of Hungarian habits of speech. There is this odd contradiction of the Hungarian temperament: a deep masculine reserve, but without the inclination to hide one's prejudices, loves, and hates. There were Hungarian disciples of Freud (Sándor Ferenczi), but they made their reputations not in Budapest but in Vienna or elsewhere; and there were Hungarian writers of great talent, such as Mihály Babits and Géza Csáth, who wrote profoundly about schizophrenia. But the great Magyar writers, knowers and alchemists of the human soul such as Krúdy, obsessed as they were with dreams and with the reality of dreams, never felt any need to expatiate upon the subconscious; and what they did not know about the strange inclinations of the male and the female, of the child and the adult spirit and mind, may not have been worth knowing.

Much of this is fairly evident from the literature of the relations of the sexes at the time, when the erotic life, too, of Budapest was less neurotic than that of Vienna. It was largely untainted by the late-nineteenth-century despair of the romantic agony. At worst, erotic life was crude and male-dominated. At best, it was late-aristocratic rather than late-bourgeois, in the sense that the desire to please had a definite priority over the wish to be loved. Perhaps this is why foreigners found Hungarian men even more attractive than they found Hungarian women, whose beauty did have a definite renown at the time; for instance, many Viennese women married Hungarian men in 1900, while the reverse of such alliances was rarer. Romantic love, the desire to please, is a main theme of such writers as Krúdy, who was otherwise startlingly, and at times even shockingly, knowledgeable of the frailties of the sexes. "That was the Age of Love in Hungary," wrote the serious, Catholic Mihály Babits in his otherwise dark novel, *Halálfiai*, "a love learned from the oldest Magyar novelist, a love that had turned to a phraseology: for what else could have been interesting in life?" A later, great poem by Babits is entitled *Two Sisters*. The two sisters are Desire and Sorrow. The poem is a deep, pessimistic tour de force of

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parallel and paradox, but there is nothing neurotic or decadent in it. And in the Budapest of 1900, desire and sorrow may have been sisters, but the former surely dominated that family scene; and, for once, Desire was the older sister while Sorrow was the younger one: Sorrow would come into her prime later.

This Hungarian comprehension of human nature (a comprehension that, however, is almost always individual, never collective), together with the recurrent energies of Hungarian optimism, this intelligent understanding—together with the reluctance of the Magyar mind and language to abstractness—may have been a factor not only in the quality of modern Hungarian literature but in the worldly success of so many Hungarians after 1900. I write "after 1900" because this, too, is something that we can recognize only in retrospect: the extraordinary and varied success of a generation of 1900 coming out of Budapest. For it was around that time that, from the gymnasiums and the universities, from the bourgeois homes of Budapest and the gentry families of this then fairly obscure and relatively small nation, an extraordinary generation of scholars, scientists, writers, thinkers, inventors, philosophers, financiers, *faiseurs*, painters, composers, musicians—a generation of Nobel prize-winners and mountebanks (in some cases, perhaps, the same persons were both)—came into the outside world, which knows the names of many of them even now, while it knows the names of some of the best of them not at all. In the succeeding tragedies and vicissitudes of Hungary, many of them left to seek their fortune and acquire their fame elsewhere, and some of the seeds of those tragedies and vicissitudes were already there in 1900.

Three generations and nearly ninety years later the Budapest of 1900 looks better than it was. By 1920 the Budapestian spirit and culture of 1900 were excoriated by many Hungarians, and very definitely by the official philosophy of the then nationalistic and counter-revolutionary regime. Fifty or sixty years later the officially Communist and Marxist government of Hungary has found it proper not only to permit but to promote the commemoration and the celebration of monuments and of people and the publication of the arts and letters of that bourgeois era, through historical reconstructions that are suffused with respect and often even with admiration. But, then, much of the same has happened with the reputation of Vienna in 1900 (or with the entire urbane and bourgeois civilization of much of the Western world at that time). Who, in 1920, or even in 1950, would have thought that "Vienna 1900" would be the subject of the most successful and fashionable exhibitions in New York and Paris, that it would become the subject of a spate of books by non-Austrians, and that the cult of Franz Josef and of the Habsburgs would become sacrosanct in Vienna, with public homage paid to it by socialist governments in Austria? Yes, Budapest 1900, too, attracts us; but we must watch for the symptoms of an uncritical and, therefore, unhistorical nostalgia.

Still, 1900 was both a milestone and a turning point in the history of Budapest. It has a meaning that is more than chronological. It provides a contrast with Vienna 1900 and Paris 1900—two capital cities of enormous importance for the culture of the Western world about which so many books have been written. The belle époque is a pleasant nostalgic phrase, but the crisis of an older France and the breaking away from the ideas, ideals, and standards of the nineteenth century had begun in Paris fifteen or even twenty-five years before 1900. In Vienna, too, 1900 was the end of the Austrian fin de siècle with many of its interesting artistic and intellectual symptoms and alarming manifestations. For Budapest, 1900 was the noon hour. In Budapest, *le mal* (if it was a *mal de siècle*) was only about to begin. Yes, in that sense Budapest was behind Vienna. But what is "behind" and what is "ahead"? Yes, the crisis of the old Liberalism, the breakdown of the old political and capitalist order and of the urbane social and financial equilibrium had come in Vienna seven or ten or twelve years before Budapest. It is, of course, not arguable that what happened in Vienna (and that what was happening in some Viennese minds, too) would influence the twin capital, that junior one, the Budapest about which many Viennese in 1900 were supercilious. They (as had Freud, for example) looked down on Budapest and on its Hungarians, that semi-barbaric country and place.

But what the Viennese did not know—and how could they?—was that in 1900 in Budapest the breaking away from the nineteenth-

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century habits of thought, of vision, of manners, and even of speech was occurring even faster than in Vienna, and in different ways. At the very moment when Budapest became the indisputable focus of Hungarian culture, a new generation of Hungarian painters and writers and composers sought and gained their inspiration from the Magyar countryside. The new Hungarian painters: Ferenczy, Hollósy, Rippl-Rónai, Csontváry learned nothing from Klimt, Schiele, Kokoschka; the writers Krúdy, Kosztolányi, Ady, Babits were very different from Musil, Trakl, Hoffmansthal; Bartók and Kodály had very little in common with Schönberg and Webern. Only in the architecture of Budapest can we still see a strong Austro-German influence.

For Budapest, 1900 was the noon hour. The zenith of its prosperity in that year coincided with the zenith of its cultural life; and a few years later—rather precisely, again, in 1905/6—the breakdown of its parliamentary and political order coincided with the public acceptance of new forms, shapes, manners, expressions. A new generation of men and women were coming into their own. Some of the colors, sounds, and words—the atmosphere, the language, and the very music of Budapest—would eventually change. *"Les parfums, les couleurs et les sons se répondent"*—there are few times and places in the world that illustrate that famous line from Baudelaire's *Correspondances* better than Budapest in 1900.

Deaf and Blind

(For Jack and Ruth Clemo)

PHILIP WEDGE

He spreads his palm; her fingers spell the words
as readers recite poems he cannot hear.
His lips move to the print upon a page
remembered before sightlessness arrived,
or spelled out braille points from more recent years.
She knows he knows the poems that are read
and taps beginnings, the lines that move her.
He grips his leg as if in sudden fear
that we are watching them communicate,
but his mind goes on reciting when she
stops; the words and meanings are for him, one.

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From Your Porch on the Bay

(Naples, Florida—1987)

M. E. MORROW

Tonight the buttonwood at water's edge,
Black-laced against a lingering light,
Stir softly to an off-shore breeze—
Sending silent, shimmering shafts of light
From a slowly rising moon
Across the farthest reaches of the bay
Where herons light in great white swoops
Amidst the tangled mangrove roots
Exposed like naked limbs above the shore.
And as an eery light pervades the sky
A whippoorwill screams by—
Its piercing, wing-born cry
Shattering the oneness of our universe,
And we are here again—
Alone again.

We rise without a word;
Another drink, another light—
To lure us on into that darkness
That is the coming,
Inescapable night.

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The Vexations of Modernism

Edmund Wilson's *Axel's Castle*

JAMES W. TUTTLETON

In "Catching Up with the Avant-Garde," a recent essay in the *New York Review*, Roger Shattuck—after taking up some eight new books that attempt to define "Modernism"—throws in the lexicographer's towel. At present the task of definition seems beyond us: "There is as much disagreement about the dating and the essential features of modernism as about the existence and nature of a fundamental particle in physics." "Modernism," Shattuck concludes, is "no more than an umbrella or bucket word" that has to do its service for movements as diverse as Impressionism, Aestheticism, Bohemianism, Symbolism, Surrealism, Dadaism, Vorticism, Futurism, the Avant-Garde, and so on. His is a problem we all share, for criticism has not yet accomplished an essential task—that of reformulating the chronology and characteristics of Modernism, putting the movement in context, and renaming it (and its successor "Post-Modernism") so as to reserve the term *modern* for what participates truly in the here and now.

I want here to explore one aspect of the problem of Modernism—the complex relationship between radical aesthetic experimentalism and the conservative cultural ideology that often accompanied it. The paradox of this relationship has been a source of consternation to radical critics from the era of the *New Masses* to that of the *Partisan Review* and beyond. Even liberals express dismay at the apparent aversion of the Modernists to the agenda of the Left. I cite merely one instance—from Lionel Trilling's recently published notebooks for 1945:

> In three-four decades, the liberal progressive has not produced a single writer that it itself respects and reads with interest. A list of writers of our time shows that liberal-progressivism was a matter of contempt or indifference to every writer of large mind—Proust, Joyce, Lawrence, Eliot, Mann (early), Kafka, Yeats, Gide, Shaw—probably there is not a name to be associated with a love of liberal democracy or a hope for it.

In exploring this paradox, my method will be to return us to a decisive moment when these tensions between radical technique and conservative attitude, as a characteristic of Modernism, received their first important expression. That moment occurred in 1931 with the publication of Edmund Wilson's *Axel's Castle: A Study of Imaginative Literature, 1870–1930.*

Wilson is a useful point of departure because, in *Axel's Castle*, in the treatment of Yeats, Valéry, Eliot, Proust, Joyce, and Gertrude Stein, he brought into focus a wide range of experimental writings that constitute at least some of the central texts of Modernism. So acutely intelligent and instructive was his account of the aims and intentions of these writers that he taught virtually a whole generation how to read their work. At the same time, however, Wilson's virtual repression of his political attitudes while writing *Axel's Castle* produced a good deal of confusion in readers as to his exact relationship to the movement, with which he is often identified as an unqualified supporter. This view of

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Wilson as the champion of Modernism needs, I believe, to be reconsidered in the light of the recent publication of his *Letters on Literature and Politics* and his diaries—*The Twenties*, *The Thirties*, *The Forties*, and *The Fifties*.

By way of a brief propaedeutic on Wilson's relation to Modernism, it will be useful to keep in mind his education in the classics at the Hill School; his studies in modern French literature at Princeton; his relationship there and thereafter with his mentor Christian Gauss; the shock of recognition when he discovered the Modernists, virtually simultaneously with some of their finest achievements; his editorial work in the 1920s at *Vanity Fair* and the *New Republic*, which put him in direct touch with some of them; and his response to the changing domestic political situation in that decade (particularly to the trial of Sacco and Vanzetti and the stock market crash). All of these experiences—especially Wilson's growing political radicalism—were decisive, I believe, in the composition of *Axel's Castle* (1931), the first book to make plain to readers interested in the avant-garde the aims, intentions, and methods of the Modernist writers. These experiences were equally decisive in turning him against the Modernists' most cherished beliefs and against some of their most brilliant and representative techniques. All this, in my view, calls into question the relation of Edmund Wilson to the Modernist movement, about which he is widely but wrongly regarded as a major sympathetic spokesman.

I

Let me begin with Wilson's letter to his Princeton classmate, the poet John Peale Bishop, dated August 1, 1922. Wilson was twenty-seven and the managing editor of *Vanity Fair*. Bishop had just married and sailed for Europe when Wilson wrote him this letter:

> I was much impressed by the furious storm which burst upon the city just at the minute of your sailing and abated as suddenly about half an hour afterwards. Ominous and heroic thunders resounded across the city and one felt in the voice of the elements something fateful and definitive, as if an epoch had been ended, a drama brought to its close—or as if it signaled some august periphery in the ardors of a god. . . .
>
> Since then, though a brightness be gone from the day, everything has gone on much the same. I discovered the key to the modern movement the other day, but will not disclose it to you here because I am on the point of writing a tremendous article about it.

The young man who had "discovered the key to the modern movement" had been educated at the Hill School and Princeton, two extremely traditional schools. While his mastery of French had prepared him to read Mallarmé, Verlaine, Remy de Gourmont, and Rimbaud in the original, I emphasize here Wilson's training in the classics and the early development in him of a combative rationalist temperament. This temperament was manifest in Wilson's hostility to religion, to the supernatural, to mystery, to feeling as a source of value, and to nineteenth-century Romanticism as the corrupting site of expressivist literary phenomena.

The evidence of his letters and diaries suggests that Wilson's love of the classics and of the classical values of reason, order, balance, and lucidity made his discovery of programmatic irrationalism in the French decadents, Symbolists, Surrealists, and Dadaists a problem for rational comprehension. Nothing in his formal education had adequately prepared Wilson for the willed repudiation of the cognitive in these forms of Modernism, which he conceived to be a latter-day manifestation of Romanticism. To a man of Wilson's classical and rationalist temperament, the literature of the Symbolists and Modernists resisted his intelligence, withheld its meaning, cloaked itself in mystifications, seemed a willed obscurantism. Yeats, Valéry, Joyce, Eliot, Proust, and Stein can only be understood, Wilson tells us in *Axel's Castle*, as having founded their work on a revolution effected in the previous generation in France, a revolution largely unknown to the Anglo-American mind.

The critical method by which Wilson will account for French Symbolism in *Axel's Castle* is predicated on an analytic procedure defined in his dedication of the book to Christian Gauss. Criticism, in Wilson's view, should provide "a history of man's ideas and imaginings in the setting of the conditions which have shaped them." This formulation, by the time Wilson comes to develop it fully, implies a historical-critical method that owes a great deal to the shaping influence of

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Voltaire, Descartes, Vico, Herder, Renan, Vigny, Anatole France, Hippolyte Taine, Shaw, Wells, Bennett, and Marx, as well as to the scientists Darwin, Einstein, and Freud. All of these influences were either fundamentally oriented toward history as providing the key to interpretation or were rationalist, scientific, and skeptical in temperament. Many were both. In any case, as an amalgam of such influences, Wilson's method leads him to interpret the French Symbolism of Mallarmé, Rimbaud, Verlaine, and Adam as a second wave of early nineteenth-century Romanticism, indeed as a degeneration of it.

The revolution that preoccupied Wilson in *Axel* manifested itself in a set of specific characteristics that made literary Symbolism exceptionally difficult for the curious rationalist to read and understand. He stresses Symbolism's destruction of the formal rules of literary art, its synesthesia, or "confusion between the perceptions of the different senses," their attempt "to make the effects of poetry approximate to those of music," and "the confusion between the imaginary and the real, between our sensations and fancies, on the one hand, and what we actually do and see, on the other." Wilson's Symbolists present a further problem to understanding in that they turn away from the objective world of bourgeois men and affairs and make the content of poetry subjective with the effect "of making poetry so much a private concern of the poet's that it turned out to be incommunicable to the reader."

The art of the incommunicable, such as we find in Mallarmé, Rimbaud, and the others, is antithetical to the *lumen siccum*, the luminous intelligence, the precision of order in the classical mind—at least as the handbooks at Hill and Princeton had then defined it. At the very moment when Wilson launches his investigation into the modern movement, he confesses to John Peale Bishop on September 5, 1922, his need for relief from the self-involvement of this kind of subjective art: "My great ambition now is to buy a little house in the country whither I can retreat and derive strength from contact with the classics and the uninterrupted contemplation of my own thoughts." The next year he reports, "I have been reading, as you will readily guess, Virgil and would commend him to your attention. He was really one of the very great poets of Europe but has been spoiled for most people by being taught in school." The *Eclogues* are praised as the inspiration to Dante; and Wilson celebrates Virgil's classical virtues—his "rigorous artistic conscience, his careful fitting of the manner to the matter, and his lifelong devotion to his craft."

Steeped in the classics, then, Wilson found it difficult to grasp why the French Symbolists were averse to rational, discursive statement and to the non-linguistic, actual world. Their preoccupation with oneiric visions; with altered states of consciousness induced by opium and morphine; and with what Wilson calls (apropos of Rimbaud) the "long, immense and reasoned *derangement of all the senses*" struck him as antithetical to common sense. He found the Symbolists' work marked by a desire "to intimate things rather than to state them plainly," an intimation presented in a "complicated association of ideas represented by a medley of metaphors" intended merely "to communicate unique personal feelings."

It is the nature of the rational mind to ask why the French writers should have done this. Wilson accounts for these literary developments by invoking the revolution in scientific thought, as described by Alfred North Whitehead. Whitehead had presented modern science as having subverted any real dualism between external nature and the mind and feelings, seeing them as "interdependent and developing together in some fashion of which our traditional notions of cause and effect, of dualities of mind and matter or of body and soul, can give us no true idea." To articulate the new understanding of the scientific view of man and nature, the Symbolist poets had thus had "to find, to invent, the special language" that would alone be capable of expressing the personality and feelings of the artist. "Such a language," Wilson wrote, "must make use of symbols: what is so special, so fleeting and so vague cannot be conveyed by direct statement or description, but only by a succession of words, of images which will serve to suggest it to the reader."

II

Having grasped the nature of these older French experiments and the conclusions of

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science on which they were grounded, Wilson then turns in *Axel's Castle* to his Modernist contemporaries. The intent of the individual chapters on Yeats, Valéry, Eliot, Proust, Joyce, and Stein is to show how the extension of Symbolist techniques into the work of these writers produced the modern movement. The result is a wonderfully ambivalent act of criticism. Wilson explicates Yeats's interest in the fairies, the motif of seclusion in the tower, the aestheticist influence of Pater's *Renaissance*, Yeats's experiments with automatic writing, theosophy, clairvoyants, astrology, and magic. Wilson understands that he is in the presence of a lyric master, but he is impatient with Yeats's devised identities, and he is critical of the mystical-metaphysical system of *A Vision* with its daimons, tinctures, cones, gyres, husks, and passionate bodies. Who can believe in this nonsense? Even Yeats doesn't believe in it. What right has he then to impose it on us? Wilson is critical of Yeats for "rejecting the methods of modern science" and so cutting "himself off in a curious way from the general enlightened thought of his time."

Wilson contrasts Yeats's visionary style with that of George Bernard Shaw's "Guide to Socialism and Capitalism" in order to show that Shaw's style is admirably figurative without being murky; indeed, all good writing (not just the Symbolist-Modernist style) operates by suggestion. The implication is that Shaw's style in presenting socialist ideology is superior to Yeats's visionary self-indulgence. Yeats is a poet, Wilson tells us, who wants "to stand apart from the common life and live only in the imagination." And Wilson is obliged to warn us of the effects of living for beauty alone, of living only in the imagination: "We shall be thrown fatally out of key with reality—we shall incur penalties which are not to be taken lightly." These penalties, however, are not specified, although his correspondence, to which I shall turn in a moment, makes the danger plain.

In respect to Valéry, Wilson finds it absurd that the poet asserts "that prose deals exclusively in 'sense' as distinguished from suggestion, and that one has no right to expect from poetry, as Valéry says in another passage, 'any definite notion at all.' " Valéry's equation of poetry and mathematics as inapplicable to reality as such, his insistence on form and form alone, is contrasted with the solid sense of Anatole France, a writer who was lucid and voluminous in all genres and who genuinely communicated with his audience on the plane of intelligence and ideas. (Anatole France, even more than Dr. Johnson, is the paradigm of Wilson's whole career in letters.)

Wilson resists vigorously "the real effect of Eliot's as of Valéry's literary criticism," namely: "to impose on us a conception of poetry as some sort of pure and rare aesthetic essence with no relation to any of the practical human uses for which, for some reason never explained, only the technique of prose is appropriate." He finds their position to be "an impossible attempt to make aesthetic values independent of all the other values. Who will agree with Eliot, for example, that a poet cannot be an original thinker and that it is not possible for a poet to be a completely successful artist and yet persuade us to accept his ideas at the same time?"

Wilson treats Proust as the first Modernist exemplar of Symbolist fiction in that he imports into the novel Bergsonian metaphysics—namely, a subjectivization of time. Wilson understands that memory is celebrated in Proust because it nullifies time. The timeless character of memory, transfixed in the novel, transforms art into a transcendental experience itself outside of time. This anti-historical bias in Proust is so defiant to common sense that Wilson seeks an explanation in the medical pathology of his author: Proust's ideas—like his physical and psychological illnesses (such as his asthma, his seclusion in the cork-lined room, his homosexuality)—are so abnormal and distinctive to him that they cannot be of general use to us.

With respect to Joyce's *Ulysses*, the technical devices that establish the mythic method (which most readers since Eliot have regarded as the chief originality of the book) are criticized in *Axel's Castle* as an interruption of the story line, interpolations that Wilson finds himself skipping "in order to find out what has happened." Stein's rhythmic experiments with the sentence are "carried to such immoderate lengths as finally to suggest some technique of mesmerism." What she has written in the twenties, Wilson writes, "must apparently remain absolutely unintelligible even to a sympathetic reader. She has outdistanced any of the Symbolists in using words for pure purposes of suggestion—she has gone so far

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that she no longer even suggests."

Having indicated Wilson's irritation with the Modernists, let us pause here at the curious break that occurs in the process of writing *Axel's Castle*, a break that has its source in Wilson's increasing political radicalism in the 1920s. (Malcolm Cowley recognized the break in *Exile's Return*, but could not adequately account for its causes.) Wilson's use of *Symbolism* shifts in meaning from the deployment of *literary techniques*, techniques of suggestive implication, to *a view of life*, a conception of the writer's relation to reality. *Symbolism*, for Wilson, comes to mean that aversion to reality, that cultivation of the self, that religion of art, that he finds aptly symbolized in Villiers de l'Isle-Adam's poem "Axel," with its Castle of Art as a refuge from the longueurs of actuality. This poem does indeed give Wilson's book its title and point of departure; but what truly bothers him is the persistence of this aestheticism in his own time.

We ought not to forget that the ultimate manifestation, for Wilson, of this Symbolist and Modernist deficiency—the departure from communication, from lucidity, from intelligibility, from serious engagement with the world of men and affairs—was the work of his contemporary, Tristan Tzara, whose "Memoirs of Dadaism" Wilson had reprinted in *Vanity Fair*, while he was managing editor there. This bizarre document forms the final appendix to *Axel's Castle* and was a vade mecum for Village Dadaists like Matthew Josephson and Malcolm Cowley in their zanier moments. Though Wilson reprints it without comment, Tzara's "Memoirs" stands as the ultimate absurdity of degenerate Modernist Romanticism.

III

Thus far I have isolated those moments in *Axel's Castle* where Wilson's classical values and rationalist temper recoil in distaste from the values and methods of his Modernist authors. This procedure seems to put Wilson out of all sympathy with his contemporaries. But since he is so widely regarded as the spokesman for Modernism, the method is essential to establish how alienated Wilson indeed was from the characteristic techniques and attitudes of these writers. It is now time to rectify the imbalance this method has produced. This necessary adjustment of the balance is compelled by the example of Wilson himself, for one of the features of what I have called the classical temper of Edmund Wilson is the desire to avoid extremes of critical judgment.

However distasteful his view of the Modernist disavowal of historical time and social responsibility, a Wilsonian sense of justice to his authors lifts him above the plane of any merely tendentious ideologue. If he is critical of Yeats's fairies and automatic writing, he finds a ground to applaud Yeats for entering the Irish Senate and devoting himself to national affairs. Yeats is now "much occupied with politics and society, with general reflections on human life—but with the wisdom of the experience of a lifetime, he is passionate even in age. And he writes poems which charge now with the emotion of a great lyric poet that profound and subtle criticism of life of which I have spoken in connection with his prose."

Eliot is saluted for having left upon English poetry, in a mere ten years, "a mark more unmistakable than that of any other poet writing English." *The Waste Land* is brilliant in its "new technique, at once laconic, quick, and precise, for representing the transmutations of thought, the interplay of perception and reflection." Eliot is in fact "a complete literary personality." Proust, though regarded as a candidate for psychoanalysis, is recovered for didactic purpose when Wilson locates a passage in which Proust commends "the reality of those obligations, culminating in the obligation of the writer to do his work as it ought to be done, which seems to be derived from some other world, 'based on goodness, scrupulousness, sacrifice. . . .' "

The very classical demand for balanced judgment, then, obliged Wilson to acknowledge the Modernists' greatness. He explains the ground of his judgment to Maxwell Perkins, in a letter in 1928:

> Now I consider three of these writers—Yeats, Proust, and Joyce—among the greatest in modern literature, and even now, not half enough appreciated. And I consider the others—even Gertrude Stein, in her early fiction—very fine. And I believe that there is a good deal of justice in their criticism of the group before them—I believe that such a reaction was inevitable.

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He told Perkins that he wanted "to give popular accounts of them which will convince people of their importance and persuade people to read them."

But the balance, with Wilson, fails of equipoise, because his politics overpowered him as writing the book dragged on toward 1931. Even though he acknowledges the Modernists' power, Wilson was really intellectually allied with the previous generation of Renan, Taine, Anatole France, Bennett, Shaw, and Wells, and with a literature more focused upon the social issues of the 1920s. Wilson wrote Perkins that

> the difference between these two generations—Shaw and France on the one hand, and Yeats and Valéry on the other—is, as I have suggested, that the earlier group were deeply influenced by the materialistic and mechanistic ideas of science, and that, partly as a consequence of this, they occupied themselves with public affairs in a way that their successors scorn. The generation since the war go in for introspection: they study themselves, not other people: all the treasures, from their point of view, are to be found in solitary contemplation, not in any effort to grapple with the problems of the general life.

However much Wilson appreciated his Romantic and Modernist contemporaries, then, he could not help constructing *Axel's Castle* in such a way as to bring their work under severe criticism. To Perkins he observes:

> In every one of them, the emphasis on contemplation, on the study of the individual soul . . . has led to a kind of resignationism in regard to the world at large, in fact, to that discouragement of the will of which Yeats is always talking (I mean that he actually advocates discouraging the will in order to cultivate the fruits of lonely meditation). The heroes of these writers never act on their fellows, their thoughts never pass into action.

Instead of resignation, passivity, inaction, Wilson wanted a literature of social engagement, reflecting the will to power, manifest in action and politics. The Modernist aversion to grappling with the problems of the general life was spectacularly illustrated for him by E. E. Cummings, whom he visited in the summer of 1929. To Allen Tate, Wilson wrote:

> I have just been up to see Cummings. . . . He certainly has the most extraordinary point of view. It is 100 percent romantic. The individual is the only thing that matters, and only the gifted individual—in fact, only the poet and artist. The rest of the world is of no importance and has to take the consequences. He keeps protesting his lack of interest in anything outside the world of his own sensations and emotions. . . . I don't know whether the type of pure romantic can survive much longer, though perhaps I think this merely because the romantic in myself has recently been giving up the ghost.

The Romantic figure—such as Cummings, the visionary Yeats, the hallucinated Eliot, the neurotic Proust—was to be understood as a reaction to the events of World War I that had produced a general disgust with the terms and conditions of the modern world. Their subjective impressionism had political implications, and Wilson promised Max Perkins that he would touch upon this fact.

But in *Axel's Castle* Wilson's politics are latent and never very obtrusive, although he does preposterously reduce Proust, in *A la recherche du temps perdu*, to "the last great historian of the loves, the society, the intelligence, the diplomacy, the literature and the art of the Heartbreak House of capitalist culture. . . ." He wrote to Perkins, in criticism of the Romantic strain of Modernism:

> I believe that any literary movement which tends so to paralyze the will, to discourage literature from entering into action, has a very serious weakness; and I think that the time has now come for a reaction against it. The disillusion and resignationism of contemporary European literature is principally the result of the exhaustion which has followed the war; and we in America, in taking from Europe . . . our literary standards and technique, have taken also . . . a sea of attitudes and ideas (I mean that the literary people have) which have absolutely nothing to do with the present realities of American life and which are largely inappropriate for us.

Wilson wanted an end to the paralysis of the will in Modernist literature, and he hoped that it would be initiated in the United States. Taking a cue from Van Wyck Brooks's *Letters and Leadership* (1918), Wilson claimed to detect "certain signs of it: in another generation or two, we may be leading the world intellectually. I feel that Europe is coming now to look to us for leaders while we are still respectfully accepting whatever they send us." But, in fact, *Axel's Castle* does not explicitly lay out Wilson's radical politics, nor does it so evidently reject the modern masters as

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reflections of a European mentality no longer of value to American art and its social conditions.

IV

For Wilson, the Modernist era had ended and would soon be replaced by a literature directed outward to the social and political realities of American life. I have called this view a recoil from the subjective impressionism of Modernist literature. When Christian Gauss suggested to him in 1929 that he write the confessions of a child of the century, Wilson replied:

> As for a *confession d'un enfant du siecle*, I fear that I shall never write one. That kind of thing is really repugnant to me, and I expect to become more and more objective instead of more and more personal. Incidentally, the diet of Symbolism, early and recent, which I have lately been consuming, has had the effect in the long run of wearying and almost disgusting me with this kind of subjective literature. I have a feeling that it has about run its course, and hope to see its discoveries in psychology and language taken over by some different tendency.

The different tendency was of course a literature of political engagement. It was already taking shape in his mind. Long before 1931 when *Axel's Castle* finally appeared, Wilson's interests were shifting to what he perceived to be the exploitation of the working class. The Sacco-Vanzetti case, which dragged on between 1920 and 1927, helped to radicalize Wilson's politics, and he and Herbert Croly at the *New Republic* quarreled over whether or not the case was a manifestation of class conflict. Wilson later remarked to Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., that "it was from this moment that I realized that [Croly] and I could not really agree about such matters (I had always had at the back of my mind the *Fabian Essays* and the Russian Revolution) and that I began to gravitate toward the socialist left." By May of 1930, Wilson was telling Allen Tate, "Politically I am going further and further to the left all the time and have moments of trying to become converted to American Communism. . . ." Communism, he opined, was theoretically sound and practically right for Russia, but he naturally had trouble figuring out how the theory could be domesticated in America. In the year that *Axel's Castle* came out, he remarked to R. P. Blackmur: "As for politics, I wish that I knew of some promising movement or program for action, but I don't, and all that we write in *The New Republic* is still almost as much in the domain of pure literature as the productions of the Symbolist poets." What he wanted was the wedding of literature to political power, in the service of radical socio-economic change. Marxist action was necessary to contain big business (which he detested), to redistribute income, and to repress bourgeois liberalism. The Crash in 1929 seemed to pose the imminent possibility of political revolution.

For the next decade, Wilson's politics were avowedly Marxist, and, for a short while, he found his political program in the Communist party, which he wanted to be seized by native radicals like himself and thoroughly Americanized. Wilson's leftist position was manifest in his call in 1932 for the election of the Communist party candidate for the presidency, William Z. Foster; in signing various appeals and open letters; in joining the National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners and the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky; in reporting on labor disputes in America and political conditions in the Soviet Union, which he visited in 1935; and in publishing his polemics in such periodicals as the *New Masses*, the *Modern Monthly*, and *Partisan Review*. Wilson's Marxist phase subsides after *To the Finland Station* (1940), by which time he has had the good sense to become disillusioned with the Soviet Union's totalitarian purges and with American Stalinists at home.

I have leaped ahead from *Axel's Castle* in order to suggest how Wilson's growing radicalism in the twenties came to separate him from the Modernist movement to which he had at first been sympathetically drawn. Between 1930 and 1950 or thereabouts, left-wing radicals continued to lay claim to the Modernists whom Wilson had celebrated, even though, like him, they could not square their admiration with the cultural conservatism of these writers, whom they came to regard as an "anti-democratic intelligentsia." Wilson's tack was somewhat different. During these decades, much like the youthful radical Van Wyck Brooks, Wilson withdrew from the Modernists because they had proved themselves uncongenial to the left-wing politics he

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had developed. Lawrence, Yeats, Pound, Eliot, Cummings, Wyndham Lewis, and other conservative writers seemed to Wilson to have swept the field. Hence he retreated into the past. In *A Piece of My Mind* (1956) Wilson characterized himself as

> more or less in the eighteenth century—or, at any rate, not much later than the early nineteenth. I do not want any more to be bothered with the kind of contemporary conflicts that I used to go out to explore. I make no attempt to keep up with the younger American writers; and I only hope to have the time to get through some of the classics I have never read. Old fogeyism is comfortably closing in.

Of course it would be a mistake to take the last remark at face value, as some of Wilson's critics did. But his aversion to Modernism and his longing for the ordered world and the polished classicism of the ancients are indeed hallmarks of his later work.

V

The ambivalence in Wilson's view of Modernism, as indicated in his letters and journals, makes it possible now to bring his limitations into clearer focus and to assess his place among the early students of the modern movement. First, Wilson's combative atheism, his naive faith in science, his hostility to religion, and his reduction of the inner life to a question of psychology (if not psychopathology) prevented him from fully engaging with the spiritual claims of some of these Modernists, such as Yeats and Eliot. These claims did not follow the direction in which Wilson's own secular rationalism invariably led. The very historical method that Wilson brought to bear upon his subjects could not adequately account for their representations of spiritual experience.

Second, their preoccupation with the inner life in lyric verse seems to have turned Wilson away from poetry itself toward a preoccupation with social novels, which he believed to reflect more directly the outward historical conditions then making a claim upon his attention. Wilson as a critic of poetry has always stirred controversy, but it is in *Axel's Castle* that he first commits the fatuity that verse is a dying technique and that the iambic line is no longer applicable to modern conditions. For this he was taken sharply to task. As Delmore Schwartz wrote in "The Criticism of Edmund Wilson":

> [W]hen it becomes a point of describing the technical working, the craftsmanship and the unique forms, which are an essential part of Symbolism, and the authors who were greatly influenced by the Symbolists, Wilson is impatient and hurried. He is not actually interested in the formal working which delivers the subject-matter to the reader. . . . It is for him the wrapping-paper which covers the gift; it is necessary to spend some time taking off the wrapping-paper and undoing the difficult knots of the cord tied about it, but the main thing is the gift inside, the subject matter.

Third, Wilson's criticism of subjectivist impressionism assumes—improperly, I think—that this literature has little relevance to external reality. But Wilson's view discounts the alterations in the consciousness of readers that such a literature may effect, with political consequences. His own reaction is exemplary in this respect.

Fourth, Wilson's treatment of Modernism failed of balance by the very inflexibility of his functionalist view of literature. His thought is of course consistent with the classical view of the purpose of literature—that it should please and instruct, and especially instruct by means of the inducement to aesthetic pleasure. But Wilson's position is taken virtually in defiance of that nineteenth-century revolution in aesthetic theory that—serving as a timely corrective to Victorian utilitarianism in art—argued for the relative to absolute autonomy of the artwork itself, a position that grounded in some measure the emerging New Criticism of the twenties, which rationalized the modern movement.

While defending himself in correspondence with Allen Tate, Wilson reformulated, more explicitly, the position that underlay his treatment of the Modernists in *Axel's Castle:*

> The point that I am trying to make when I talk in this vein is that art and science both are merely aids to getting by in the world. They harmonize or explain limited fields of experience and so comfort and reassure us and also, in proportion as they are original and profound, actually make it easier for humanity to live and improve itself. The end is not art or science but the survival and improvement of humanity. So that it seems likely that the time will come eventually when the artistic and scientific masterpiece will be not a theory or a book but human life itself.

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Such a view of human perfectability is of course wildly visionary and reflects a utopian belief in the "New Man" to be created by the advent of Communism. But Wilson—who believed in the false claim of Marxism to be an objective science—could not see that his utopian view of human nature was a manifestation of the ghost of his own Romanticism. He told Tate that he had dramatized this idea in his novel *I Thought of Daisy,* where "the hero, seeing science and art as techniques for getting by, . . . embraces art as a useful trade like carpentry."

In a revealingly coarse redefinition, Wilson told Tate, "Symbolism was the atmospheric or arty side of art and naturalism the factual side," and, the two having become divorced, a reintegration of them needed to take place again. Wilson contrasted himself to Tate by pointing out that he was older enough than Tate

> to have been brought up on a literature which did mix these two elements in better proportions than the literature of after the war, which was what you were reading when you were in college and which seems to you the normal thing. It seems abnormal to me and that is the reason I take the point of view I do in *Axel's Castle;* I'm looking back to Shaw, Wells, Bennett, France, Flaubert, Dostoevsky, Ibsen, Renan, et al. You call some of these people propagandists, but I don't see how you could if you had read them—which I bet you haven't—if by propaganda you mean the kind of thing which is put out by governments, political parties, etc. If by propaganda you mean, on the other hand, merely attempts to persuade people of one's point of view or particular way of seeing things, every writer is a propagandist.

Wilson's position here reduces art to the rhetoric of persuasion, defining it functionally as a mere instrument, or technique, like science, for explaining experience, comforting and reassuring us, didactically helping us to survive, and effecting social progress. While this view is founded on the classical function of art as didactic, Wilson's notion that art is persuasive (if generalized) propaganda and the view that it is a "useful trade," like any other, reveal an unfortunate philistinism reminiscent of Shaw, Wells, France, and the other socially oriented anti-Symbolists with whom Wilson so unmistakably allied himself.

Art ultimately does, I believe, reveal a didactic horizon, but this horizon comes into view only after the immediate effect of the work of art—on feeling, on emotion, on sensibility—has been brought into the mind with its capacity for reflective thought. Wilson's chief deficiency as a critic of Modernism is that he had no vocabulary for the effect on sensibility of the ineffable, the mystical, or the transcendental. But this is a vocabulary that we need, for it is the language that poets use—and not always in ways that imply a vulgar religious superstition. As valuable as Wilson's Apollonian perspective may be, there is a Dionysian energy in art, an energy that may be terrible in its revelations, that gives to art a life—inseparably intertwined with its form—that we find humanly compelling. We see this most clearly in the dance, in music, in styles of painting like abstract expressionism where a direct and unmediated experience of this pre-rational, this primordial energy is sought for or expressed. It is a feature of art that is beyond cognition and rational analysis. Analysis may, in fact, in trying to explain art, end up in explaining art away. Wilson has a momentary intuition of this danger—the danger of transposing the irrational into the rational—in his comment on Valéry in *Axel's Castle:* "In trying to clear up his meaning, one clears it up too much." On the whole, however, Wilson was unwilling to concede the reality of the inexplicable as such or to admit that the revelation of the tragic and terrible in art may not "help" us in any tidy, cheerful way.

Wilson's was thus an agenda for what Denis Donoghue has called, in another context, *The Arts Without Mystery.* As Donoghue has observed, the arts do contain a mystery. This mystery, this energy, this life in art that eludes rational explanation, is transcendental, but its ineffability is not to be confused with the religious experience. Art is not religion and can never be a substitute for religion or for an ethics properly founded on religious belief. Donoghue is absolutely on target when he remarks, "If you wanted to neutralise the arts and remove their mystery, the best strategy would be to reduce them to psychology and politics."

In *Axel's Castle,* Wilson undertook to tame the Modernist writers by invoking the canons of a naturalistic psychology and a left-wing politics. Yeats's claim for a visionary experience, Proust's notation of a timeless dimension of consciousness, Joyce's location of the

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present within the cycle of the mythic return, Eliot's timeless moments of epiphanic revelation—all of these are neutralized by Wilson's reductionist historicism (in the manner of Taine, Renan, and Marx) to matters of psychology and politics. Yet if Wilson was not the perfect reader, he was, in his grasp of trends, movements, and typologies of literature, of immense value in his time; and his skeptical response to his major contemporaries made him a very lucid (though ultimately reductive) analyst of their work. At the very least, in *Axel's Castle* he formulated the problem that has continued to vex radical critics in their relation to the great conservative Modernist masters.

Have I Not Played Well, Robert?

THOMAS CARPER

After a performance of some solo pieces, Clara Schumann saw her husband motionless and cold. "Have I not played well, Robert?" But there came no response, and she wept whilst the hall was ringing with ecstatic applause.

During hours at home—Robert and she
At composition, or perfecting work
For the great concert stages—intimacy
Infused their feeling and became a mark
Of each one's music. Simply to shape a phrase
Meant following the contour of a care
For that loved other being; simply to raise
A tempo was a small event to share.
Out in the world they were as one, though when
An inexplicable coldness would displace
The aura of entire communion,
Or an estranged look stiffen the other's face,
Such depths of art and love were depths to fear,
Whatever others chose to see or hear.

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Jacob Burckhardt

The Historian Among the Philologists

KARL JOACHIM WEINTRAUB

On August 8, 1897, Jacob Burckhardt died at Basel, seventy-nine years after his birth there on May 25, 1818. He had last published a book in 1867: *Geschichte der Renaissance in Italien*, a book on architectural style that, of course, should not be confused with the earlier and more famous *Kultur der Renaissance in Italien* (1860). For the last thirty years of his life, Burckhardt the author had given way to Burckhardt the Basel professor, doing his work as a teacher. He had become famous enough for his own taste. The Archaeological Society of Moscow had made him a member in 1865, the Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften in Göttingen in 1865, the Bavarian Akademie in 1869 (recognizing him explicitly for his contributions to medieval history), and the Accademia di San Luca in Rome in 1884. He had received offers of professorships from Kiel in 1862 (to succeed Gregor Wilhelm Nitzsch), in 1866 from Jena and from Heidelberg, in 1867 from Tübingen and Göttingen, in 1868 from Karlsruhe, in 1872 the newly German University of Strassburg wanted him for art history, and in the same year came an invitation from Berlin, apparently on the initiative of three great ancient historians—Curtius, Droysen, Mommsen—after Ranke had retired there. Others obviously looked upon him as "an eminent capacity." But he preferred to stay at Basel with its university of barely two hundred students.

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Then suddenly after 1897 there appeared several posthumous Burckhardt works: *Erinnerungen aus Rubens* (1897), *Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte von Italien* (1898), *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen* (1905) (known in English as *Force and Freedom*), and, of particular interest, the *Griechische Kulturgeschichte* published in four volumes between 1898 and 1902. From this time onward there arose a regular Burckhardt industry, resulting in the availability, among other items, of all his letters and the momentous six-volume biography by Werner Kaegi of the University of Basel.

Upon its publication—and in part while the work was still being published—the *Griechische Kulturgeschichte* received a series of devastating reviews. Two foremost German ancient historians, Eduard Meyer and Julius von Beloch, condemned the work as "useless." In volume 3 of the *Geschichte des Altertums* (1901), Eduard Meyer inserted an overview of Greek historiography since the time of August Böckh in the early nineteenth century. In the overview Meyer attacks the presumptuous dilettantes who thought they could write Greek history without taking full account of the detailed scholarship produced in the nineteenth century. Among such dilettantes he included Ranke and Burckhardt, whom he otherwise considered first-rate scholars and historians. "It is as if someone wished to write a history of mathematics without knowing the most important theorems of this science. . . . Men of research will indignantly cast such works aside." Julius von Beloch reviewed volumes 1 and 2, and then volume 3, in the *Zeitschrift fur Sozialwissenschaft* in 1899 and 1901, joining in Mey-

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er's condemnation and adding two reflections: Burckhardt clearly was not a significant enough figure to justify reading his insignificant views simply because they were Burckhardt's; and, second, perhaps the still-expected publication of volume 4 would, at least, bring a Burckhardtian cultural history that might have some value as a work of art.

The most damning and damaging reviews, however, came from the foremost spokesman of the philological profession, Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff. Having seen only the first two volumes of the *G.K.*, Wilamowitz stated, in 1899 in his introduction to the *Griechische Tragödien:*

> It would, finally, be a cowardly act if I were not to state here that the Greek cultural history by Jacob Burckhardt, which some might trustingly take in hand, does not exist for the world of scholarship. The piety for this revered man has been damaged by those who throw before the public his outdated sketches and not by someone, who as expert, under the pressure of necessity, must state that this book has nothing to say about either Greek religion or the Greek state that is deserving of attention, simply because it ignores what scholarship of the past fifty years has gained in documents, facts, methods, and perspectives. The Greek World (*das Griechentum*) of Burckhardt has existed just as little as the classicistic aesthetics against which he himself polemicised rightly fifty years ago.

Thus Wilamowitz broke the staff over a book from the man whom he, as secretary of the Göttingen academy, had celebrated on the occasion of Burckhardt's seventy-fifth birthday in May of 1893 by uttering the wish that Burckhardt should inform "wider circles . . . how the vision of your ripe wisdom has learned to perceive and to judge the objects of your earlier reflections, the culture of mankind and its noblest products."

Indeed, even early on, the *Griechische Kulturgeschichte* received favorable reviews, such as the long one by Carl Neumann in the influential *Historische Zeitschrift,* edited by Friedrich Meinecke, and one by the Byzantinist Heinrich Gelzer. But both scholars had been Burckhardt's students. Robert Pöhlmann, the Munich historian of socialism in antiquity, surveyed Greek historiography in an academy oration in 1902 in which he greeted Burckhardt's work as an important and fresh attempt to interpret the Greek world. Yet it is probably correct to say that, for the profession, Wilamowitz's adverse judgment prevailed until after the 1930s and World War II.

How is the fate of this late work to be explained? And how can an admirer of Burckhardt deal with its condemnation by some of the greatest scholars of the classical world? These questions can best be addressed by concentrating on Burckhardt's intentions and his personal conception of the historical task.

Burckhardt had expected the professionals' condemnation of the *Griechische Kulturgeschichte* from the time he first began to think about writing it. He never pretended to be an expert on anything. He knew he was no philologist. He increasingly recognized that, as a historian, he worked differently than other craftsmen of this important nineteenth-century form of scholarship. Burckhardt's letters to German friends of the late 1830s and early 1840s already contain suggestions that he had his own conceptions of the Greeks. A decade later, when he taught at the Basel Paedagogium—a sort of high school for those who wanted to go to the university, and staffed largely by professors of the university—he also taught ancient history and art history. In the period from 1849 to 1860, he worked on three of his great books: *The Age of Constantine the Great*, the *Cicerone* to the art treasures of Italy, and the *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy.* In 1859 he taught a course on classical architecture at the University of Basel and in 1860 a general course on classical history.

As one of the very few historians at Basel, Burckhardt always felt a responsibility for a wide set of courses. By 1864 it is clear that he was beginning to think of offering a regular year-long sequence on Greek culture. He mentioned this at the railway station to his colleague Otto Ribbeck, the philologist, and in a letter to him on July 10, 1864, Burckhardt notes: "Now or never, I will work my way through Aristotle's *Politics*—and then I want to see what will come of my curious and wildly-grown manner of roaming through Hellenic matters, but of course not for a book, but only for an academic course on the mind of the Greeks—but you must not give me away, or I will be embarrassed." Even though Burckhardt eventually found the courage to write these lectures, he never quite lost his

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sense of embarrassment about them. He had a formal excuse for getting into this work because none of his colleagues seemed willing to take on this neglected Cinderella subject (he used the term *Aschenbrödel*, stressing the idea of a poor relation). But to this he adds very quickly that, at his age, he deemed it desirable to try out certain topics, "otherwise one stands still." As Burckhardt steeped himself in the study of the ancient texts, he spoke mostly about lectures, but there were occasional references to "perhaps a book." Until his last days on earth, he wavered between his intention of "only a lecture course" or "perhaps a book," although the heavier stress was placed on the lectures. He considered some of the lectures inadequate and allowed that he had "stuffed some of the cracks with moss."

During 1867, 1868, and 1870 Burckhardt still lectured on general ancient history; then came a course entitled Ancient History Excluding Rome. In 1872 he finally began the cycle on Greek cultural history that he repeated, in five hours per week, during the academic years 1874, 1876, 1878, 1880, 1883, and 1885. After 1886, Burckhardt lectured only on art history. Although these Greek lectures drew large audiences of fifty to sixty listeners (a crowd for nineteenth-century Basel—he even says "some have to stand") these lectures were not as popular as the ones on the French Revolution, which Burckhardt liked the least, or his later lectures on the art of antiquity.

What was Burckhardt's true intention: lectures or a book? By 1880 he had written down a clear copy in folio format (which he used for his books in contrast to the quarto format used for lectures) of what we now have as the first two volumes of the *Griechische Kulturgeschichte*. In a letter to his publisher he hints at a thousand-page book that he, as author, meant to subsidize because it seemed to him too risky a venture for a commercial publisher. But shortly after this, Burckhardt complains that he has ventured forth "on too vast a sea," and any publisher who subsequently inquires about a manuscript is told that there is no such manuscript. We know for certain that by 1890 there were neat copies in folio of volumes 1 and 2, and in quarto of the lecture notes for volumes 3 and 4, and that he made corrections in the lectures as late as 1892.

In his last will Burckhardt ordered the destruction of most of his notes on most of his courses. Why did he not destroy them himself? He left all the materials on the Greek history to his nephew Jacob Oeri with the notation that "none of these should be put in print." When Oeri asked Burckhardt, on his deathbed, how this was to be understood, he was told: "You have no obligation to publish this." A year after Burckhardt's death, Oeri, a trained philologist, had published the first two volumes based on his uncle's own manuscript. By 1902 all four volumes were out. The last two are based on Oeri's editorial work on the lecture notes and the verbatim lecture notes from students who had attended the lectures. Clearly, Burckhardt felt some desire to see the book published. Just as clearly, another intention opposed publication, perhaps a bit of cowardice that made him deny his intellectual child. He expressed this hesitation best in a response to Heinrich Gelzer, who admonished him during the middle 1880s to publish the *Griechische Kulturgeschichte*. "No my dear Sir, such a poor stranger who lives outside the professional guild cannot dare to do so; I am a heretic and an ignoramus and with my questionable opinions I would be plucked apart badly by the *viri eruditissimi*. Oh, yes, yes believe me, *je connais ces gens*, I know those gentlemen. I need peace and quiet in my old days."

These most learned gentlemen, the *viri eruditissimi* (he always used the superlative when he spoke of them), were often on the mind of Professor Burckhardt. They play a frequent role in his processes of professional self-assessment. In one sense, he had a solid respect for them. He knew that he lived in an age that had made immense advances in knowledge and erudition. He used the fruits of their labor, the learned *Handbücher*. He frequently cites from the encyclopedia by August Pauly and Georg Wissowa. He steadily admonished students of their responsibility to know something thoroughly. He called himself a dilettante and ignoramus who never pretended to possess sufficient knowledge for any topic. But it is one thing to let him say this about himself; it is quite another thing to think that he was a lazy or careless worker. Like Ranke, who had chosen as his motto *Labor Ipse Voluptas*, Burckhardt was one of the hardest scholarly workers and professors of the century; that he was a bachelor

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assured this even more. His summer travels were study trips. In his Paedagogium teaching—which he, as a professor, without additional compensation, continued to do until 1874 for seven hours a week and after 1874 for three hours a week—he tried to provide solid training in the facts of history. Carl Spitteler, one of his students there, later complained that Burckhardt, the teacher, "vastly overestimated [the value] of learnable knowledge and diligence in school." But as Burckhardt said to Nietzsche in a letter, trying to justify his own teaching of history as a propaedeutic subject: "I had to provide people with that skeleton which they cannot do without, for whatever sort of study, if everything should not just hang there in the air."

Certainly, Burckhardt worked hard and knew the virtue of wide learning. Yet there is always the irony underlying the superlative when speaking of the *viri eruditissimi*. It sounds as if he looks down on them; better perhaps, he implies that he has no desire to be one of them. They embodied for him the realm of specialization that he did not choose for himself and that, in some ways, he abhorred. He had a sort of hygienic aversion to them, viewing them as a contentious breed with ruined nerves and bad digestion. The most important question for him was where all the work of these *viri eruditissimi* was leading. He feared a future full of inchoate and non-interrelated knowledge that no one could hope to master. In a lecture on early medieval culture, Burckhardt remarked: "Theoderic the Great shows himself to be a helplessly learned man, as there exist so many nowadays." In the *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen*, on which Burckhardt worked while also preparing the Greek lectures, he tells his students: "As a scholar you can only be a master when you are a specialist, and in some subject you should try to be that"; but, he adds, in other things have the courage to be an intelligent dilettante. In the same text he also attacks the specialized historians: "In front of them a mountain of history, they dig a hole in it, behind themselves they leave a pile of rubble and rubbish, and die." Burckhardt could be unkind to his fellow historians, but the arch-specialist for him was the philologist, whom he often calls "the mere philologist."

Like every other prominent nineteenth-century scholar, Burckhardt was very much exposed to the influence of philology. Every university-trained man was affected by philology since training in that area provided access to the university. Humanistic education was classical training, and that meant, above all, training in languages. Before he became a university student, Burckhardt had for many years studied Greek and Latin for fourteen hours each week. He often used Latin to summarize his reading. In his self-composed funeral oration, he praised his teachers for giving him a solid command of the languages. He also learned much from his father, a theologian, who was very well trained in philology. The young Burckhardt worked on coin collections, inscriptions, and did paleographic and diplomatic work, from all of which he retained a lifelong fascination with dating things.

At the Paedagogium he was taught by such philological eminences as Wilhelm Wackernagel and Wilhelm Vischer, the student of Niebuhr and Böckh. From Vischer, as later on from Böckh himself, Burckhardt acquired one sense of philology as *Altertumswissenschaft*, the study of antiquities as the antiquarian practices it. When he was a student at the universities of Neuenburg and Basel, supposedly studying theology, he actually took more courses in classics, and at home he filled notebooks with such studies as the specific language of Hesiod's *Erga* or Aeschylus's plays, Sophocles' *Oedipus Coloneus*, Plato's *Phaedo*, the *De anima mundi* of Timaeus of Locri; he made prose translations of Pindar, and sought to reconstruct geography from Aeschylus's *Prometheus Bound*. He studied Greek mythology, worked hard on Ovid's *Fastës*, on Orphic hymns, the comparative history of polytheistic religions, and even the history of dogma of Greek Jews (as this was taught by Johann Georg Müller). And at Bonn and Berlin Burckhardt heard Grimm on Tacitus's *Germania*, took Böckh's famous course on the *Staatshaushalt der Athener*, and heard the young Droysen on Alexander and Hellenistic culture. And, of course, Burckhardt was a student in Ranke's famous seminar where he learned the niceties of historical care. So, Burckhardt knew full well the importance of language training—and the aid one received from auxiliary sciences. Above all, he understood how many rewards came from reading sources.

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Sources Burckhardt read all of his life. He never tired of admonishing students, listeners, and readers to read sources—and, then, to read them again. Yet his critical view of philology as a discipline appeared as early as the 1840s, the very years when he began to sort out more clearly what historical study meant to him. Arnaldo Momigliano, in his introductory essay to the Italian edition of 1955 of the *Griechische Kulturgeschichte*, quotes from a letter to Gustav Kinkel of February 1843, a letter worth noting again:

> Philology proves its mental bankruptcy more and more by the fact that it has not produced a good presentation of antiquity. Niebuhr is only for studying . . . but dreadful (*scheusslich*) to read. Nothing exists on Greece; Otfried Müller knows only erudite objectives. One of these days we shall discover that the first readable history of antiquity will see the light of day without contribution from the philologists. . . . Philology is today only a second-rate science, despite all the grand airs she assumes.

It is not altogether clear at this point what philology meant to Burckhardt. Nor is it known what he thought of the great tradition of establishing critical editions of texts, the work practiced by such philologists as Gottfried Hermann, Immanuel Bekker, Karl Lachmann, Johan Madvig, or Friedrich Ritschl. Did he appreciate the great collections of inscriptions that were being edited? Burckhardt used some of these, as he also used numismatic studies, for his Greek history. But the closer he came to composing those lectures, the clearer it became that he equated philology with the evils of specialization.

In part, Burckhardt is humble about his own lack of training. In a lecture entitled "The Value of Dio Chrysostomus for Knowing His Times" (1864), he, as a non-philologist, asked the experts for their indulgence. In the very first sentence of the very important preface to the Greek history, he also pleaded that a *Nicht-Philologe* such as himself be forgiven an occasional error or omission. But then he drew sharper lines. He gratefully recollected Böckh's course on antiquities but, in contrast to his own work, characterized it as essentially antiquarian, a specialized work useful only for specialized subjects. In part it has been superseded by the *Handbücher* of Hermann and Wachsmuth. "What belongs into a *Handbuch* can hardly be the subject of a course." In a later passage of the preface, Burckhardt again declared that antiquities (*Altertümer*), as learned specialized knowledge, were not his subject, although he admitted one should remember the learned matters in one's schoolbag. After a page on his own objectives, Burckhardt again asserted that he did not aim at specialized studies but at something he hoped would result in participation with the whole culture. "Sufficient erudition can be had from many works of modern historical-antiquarian literature." He next made the unfortunate concession to the very argument that English scholars have subsequently used to attack the so-called "Tyranny of the Greeks" over the German mind by maintaining that Germany since the time of Winckelmann, Lessing, Voss, Goethe, and Schiller had entered an *ieros gamos*, or holy matrimony, with the Greek spirit. Burckhardt warned both against specialization and a predominantly philological system of schooling.

When Burckhardt was working out such thoughts, Nietzsche was for several years his colleague at Basel. Some have concluded from this that the philosopher influenced Burckhardt, especially by such works as *The Birth of Tragedy* and the *Use and Abuse of History*. Yet Burckhardt had such thoughts long before he knew Nietzsche. If there was any influence, it would have been his own on the younger colleague who admired him. In the Greek history, Burckhardt made only sparing use of ideas from *The Birth of Tragedy;* he made much more use of Erwin Rohde's (Nietzsche's close friend) fine work on Greek prose. In his work Burckhardt took up an anti-philosophical stance in general, and he distrusted Nietzsche's philosophy in particular. Burckhardt had become, and wanted to remain, a historian. Historical contemplation (*Geschichtsbetrachtung*) was his chosen métier. His true subject was *das Geschichtliche*, that which constitutes the historical dimension in all human existence. Only the barbarian can afford to have no sense of the historical dimension. Burckhardt thought that the nineteenth century had a special capacity for such an active contemplation of history because it was no longer dominated by religion or by any one prevailing ideology, and it had been powerfully affected by a general outlook on life in which process, evolution, change, and development were seen as hallmarks of all exist-

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ence. The True, the Good, and the Beautiful were now known to be colored and conditioned by time—although Burckhardt, in some moods, might also counterbalance this tendency to historicize everything by assigning more absolute value and permanence to the Beautiful.

In general, Burckhardt saw no Archimedean point outside of time from which to view human life. He derived his own sense of freedom from such a historical view of life. But he was also fearful that such a measure of relativized historical reality might be harmful for human beings—especially when it was accompanied by an exaggerated trust in a loudly proclaimed unlimited human capacity. He distrusted the optimism of the nineteenth century, in particular that of its educators, its engineers, and its untutored masses claiming rights to comfort, easy education, and well-being beyond all limits of the humanly possible. Certain trends of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution had created conditions that had thrown the individual upon his own resources, much as this had been the case with modern Europe's first-born son, the Man of the Renaissance. This was a dangerous freedom, as it had been for Renaissance Man, because it could result in the kind of subjectivism in which the individual, with too few inner resources of his own, could capsize. Burckhardt saw a protection against subjectivism in the active historical contemplation of Man in all his variations *and* his constancies, in the perception of human greatness *and* human suffering. Such historical contemplation would not teach us applicable lessons for solving immediate problems. It merely could make us wiser.

This view of history directed Burckhardt's personal life and informed his professional activity. Historical and art historical contemplation of Western Man in all his historical variations was a personal necessity for him. He might fuss about colleagues who were unwilling to do this course on the Greeks, but it is clear that Burckhardt had to write these lectures because it was a personal necessity for him to obtain an overall view of the Greek world. He had to do this for himself, and he had to do it in his own way. He explained to Friedrich von Preen and to other friends how this need of making it his very own work also dictated that he concentrate his efforts on reading the sources instead of relying on modern treatises. He was clever enough to make an educational virtue of this need. For by his work he meant to persuade others to read these sources also and to engage others in the task of acquiring their own historical vision. As his audience, he envisaged the generally educated person, the students who would become lawyers, engineers, even philologists, or the burghers of Basel for whom he gave so many public lectures. He had very few doctoral students, and he did not see his professional task to be that of training professional historians. He took it instead to be the more important task of leading, if he could, the educated person and the general carriers of culture into a realm of diverse historical reflection, so that historical contemplation might become a stabilizing and a harmonizing force in modern life.

For such purposes Burckhardt preferred a mode of history he called *Kulturgeschichte*. What precisely he meant by this remains debatable. He made no claim for precision. As he says in the preface to the Greek history: "We can move freely. Fortunately it is not only the concept of *Kulturgeschichte* which is shaky, but so is the academic practice (and also a few other things)." Admittedly, the choice of subjects of such history had a subjective aspect. "We are *unwissenschaftlich*, or non-scientific, and we have no method—at least not that of the others." In a sense, cultural history meant for him what can be called "background history." He tried to differentiate it from narration of events and often spoke of a desire to look for the more typical, the more permanent. Instead of narration of events (which he in no way undervalued), he wanted to gain vantage points for the better understanding of events, as if to say that the specific occurrence only gains its full meaning against the background panorama furnished by cultural history. Only in the context of a whole way of life can the event become a telling and revealing happening. The great twentieth-century cultural historian Johan Huizinga completely agreed with Burckhardt in this belief. The task of the cultural historian was thus to construct his illuminating background view of a culture. Burckhardt's notion of culture is not restricted to the finer things, such as thought, art, and religion, but includes all that characterizes a human existence, a

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way of life, taken as an interconnected whole.

In the context of the German-speaking world of the nineteenth century, it was practically impossible for Burckhardt not to use—and to misuse—the term *Geist*. "The entire study must be directed to the history of the Greek *Geist*." Burckhardt certainly wrote at times as though he presupposed such a *Geist*, or spirit, just as he succumbed at times to the use of such nineteenth-century notions as a national character; in his book on the Renaissance, for instance, Burckhardt is often more inclined to attribute a development to the specific Italian character than to a revival of classical influences. One may differ in regard to the degree to which Burckhardt really presupposed the Greek spirit. An additional complication lies in the damnable imprecision of the German word *Geist*, for it means "mind" as well as "spirit." In a centrally important passage of his book on the Renaissance, which explains that man now became *ein geistiges Individuum*, the stress is on the mental processes whereby man, in his own mind, experiences himself as something distinct from the context, as a being conscious of his mental makeup who carries this consciousness in his mental image of himself. This sense of *Geist* is also at work in the Greek history where it is used as a handy summarizing term. The more precisely defined objective of the study is found in such formulations as: "Our task is, as we conceive it: the history of the Greek modes of thinking and prehension (*Denkweisen* and *Anschauungen*) . . . the recognition of the living forces, constructive as well as destructive ones which were at work in Greek life." Or, "We aim at the internal condition of a past humanity . . . as it was, willed, thought, prehended, and was capable (*wie diese war wollte, dachte, schaute und vermochte*)."

In the tradition of Herder, Burckhardt believed that peoples were highly specified actualizations of a general human potential, which as a whole potential could never be actualized at one time. Man was a Proteus, revealing himself in history in different forms: as Greek, as Roman, as Medieval, as Renaissance Man. Burckhardt took as the central object of historical study Man as he historically manifests himself in specific forms, which in turn account for specific historical periods. Thus it was important for him to know how the Greek or the Renaissance Man thought of himself, both what he wanted and how he viewed the world; and for that knowledge a telling anecdote, even if it could be shown to be untrue, or even from a dubious source, could be important. The methodological difficulties were twofold: how can one obtain a valid view of the typically Greek and how then can one present this both with structural coherence and in chronological sequence as a changing thing? Burckhardt knew these difficulties. In each of his great books he lamented the need to take apart what ought to be presented as a continuum. Each time he tried to provide the historical, the developing dimension, within the generalized panorama of the cultural conditions. He spoke of "the great deceptions" to which the researcher was exposed. "How does he know what is constant and characteristic, what was a force and what was not? Only a long and many-sided reading can show it to him." Meanwhile the researcher may err in mistaking something as important and overlook a fact that could tell him much more.

Having chosen this methodological position, Burckhardt saw his initial task as reading and rereading sources. He concentrated on this, and he gave much less time to the critical studies on the sources that other scholars were meanwhile providing. He read most of the Greek authors. He added to this the major Latin authors, Greek authors of the Imperial Age, a relatively limited number of patristic authors, some Byzantine ones, including the so-called Suidas, and occasionally even such things as Eudokia's *Violarium*, for which the philological critics lashed him in particular. He obviously sought to obtain a deep understanding of the chief authors from Homer to Polybius; what he has to say about them has that distinctive Burckhardt flavor. If philologists or literary scholars doubt that this historian knew how to probe the great and the minor authors, they should read him on Homer, Pindar, Aeschylus, Aristophanes, Menander, or Apollonius of Rhodes. He surrounds and bolsters the insights extracted from the writers of each successive age by an immense body of detail drawn from writers who have the quality of being great depositories of matters Greek: the geographers Pausanias and Strabo, Plutarch, Athenaeus of Naucratis, or Claudius Aelianus of Praeneste.

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The use of such late "grab bag writers," of course, presents a problem, but, insofar as I can determine, Burckhardt uses their endless stories only when these support or reinforce an insight first gained from the contemporary writers, orators, and historians. He also relied a good deal on modern handbooks, Pauly-Wissowa, and such modern authors as Curtius, Otfried Müller, Rohde, Schäfer, Fustel de Coulanges, or Mommsen. All in all, central to the book is Burckhardt's reading of the contemporary Greek sources.

With this knowledge, and his thoughtful reflections upon it, Burckhardt wrote his lectures, which, in book form, fill some eighteen hundred pages. He organized the presentation to fit his own vision. In the first three volumes he deals with the topics he deemed central to an understanding of the Greek world—and with the Greek world as a whole, including the colonies, Sicily, and Lower Italy. He sees an essential characteristic that Greek life had many centers, that it was a world of poleis (in the plural), and that it yet had a common culture. And it is, en passant, an interesting question whether a history of the Greek world, unlike the Roman world, could truly come into its own until it could be seen as a cultural history. After a brief geographical and ethnographic discussion, making clear how unwilling he was to study "origins," Burckhardt turns to the fundamental topic of the Greeks and their myths, the local variations, and the role of singers and poets in giving firmer form to them. In myth the Greeks showed how they saw and understood the world. This ocean of myth provided for many developments of the culture. There then follows a 250-page discussion about the political order, the polis in its different forms and phases of development, the thoughts it evoked for Greeks themselves, its pervasive effects on all aspects of Greek existence, and its domination over the individual. This is a painfully sober and somber section of the work.

A little more than half of volume 2 is devoted to Greek religion and cults, in their immense variety, their ties to myth and the emergent rationalist critique. Here the stress falls on the interplay of state and cult life. There follows a section on Greek divination of the future; and this leads into a remarkble central section in which Burckhardt tries to draw a balance sheet of Greek life as an intensely agonistic life, aristocratic and antibanausic in its truest colors, and basically pessimistic in outlook. This is a very revisionistic piece of history.

Volume 3 is devoted to the arts and philosophy and science. Burckhardt's treatment of the fine arts, quite different from what he did in his art history courses, dwells on the public function of the arts, on their relations to myth and cult life, and how differently writers and artists handled myth. There follows an amazing section on Greek music, leading into the section on literature, which is organized entirely according to genres. Here Burckhardt shows what a sensitive reader of literature he was. From there a short discussion of the qualities of the Greek language flows into a long section on philosophy, scholarship, science, and rhetoric. In this section one of Burckhardt's key themes comes into play—the emergence of the "freestanding personality," which gradually extricated itself from the dominance of myth, religion, and the state.

While the dominant organization of volumes 1 through 3 is thus the cross-sectional topical analysis of Greek cultural features, the reading of each part shows also an underlying chronological sequence. In volume 4 Burckhardt moves through all these materials again, but now organizes the whole around dominant forms of Greek Man in such successive sub-forms as Heroic Man, the Colonial and Agonistic Man, the Man of the Fifth Century, the Man of the Fourth Century, and Hellenistic Man. He thus passes in review the development of an essentially Greek type of man and aligns the insights of his previous topical analyses to derive a gradually modified Greek personality type. Max Weber, with his notion of the "ideal type," would have understood what Burckhardt was doing. We now know from the notes in the *Nachlass* that Burckhardt had intended to add such a section on Renaissance Man (which is also an ideal-typical usage) to his book on the Renaissance. Wisely, he dropped this plan for architectonic reasons; it would have made that book top-heavy at the end.

But, in the Greek cultural history, covering so much longer a time span, the methodological choice to analyze Greek Man in his successive sub-types was, in my view, a very wise one. It was an inevitable choice for a

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historian who focused on historical man in what he believed, was, willed, and suffered; and also for a historian inclined to find the importance of institutions, thought, and art only insofar as he could relate it to the historical man who experienced these, worked with them, and expressed his experience in them. The historical-developmental aspect of the work was most significant for Burckhardt in the historical modification of a basic cultural type.

Among Burckhardt's published works are two major books on classical matters: *The Age of Constantine the Great* and the *Griechische Kulturgeschichte*. Both are in some sense revisionist history. Despite the enthusiastic receptivity Burckhardt had for the great Greek achievements, he had, as a pessimist and historian, an incorruptible soberness. His presentation of Greek life was an antidote to the long-reigning view of the Greeks that—in the tradition of Winckelmann, Schiller, and Hölderlin—stressed their idealism, their positive view of the world, their harmony of person and art, their public-mindedness, and their love of beauty and freedom—"*das heitere Griechentum*." Shortly before Burckhardt, Ernst Curtius had written his immensely popular *Griechische Geschichte bis zur Schlacht bei Chaeronea* (three volumes, 1857–67) from such a perspective. Burckhardt was struck by the essentially pessimistic Greek view of life. He also dwelled on the somber effects of all agonistic tensions in Greek life, the harm done to patient labor by the aversion to banausia, the deep fears about life's uncertainties. He counteracted George Grote's great history, which had glorified the development of Greek democracy and rationalism. Burckhardt saw the state servitude of the individual, the threat of *asebie* trials and the vicious sycophancy, the constant threat to all property by forced levies and expropriation. As always, he feared the amoral powers of the state. He was pained by the horrors of Greek killing Greek and the unscrupulous ruthlessness with which the thinkers attacked one another. Burckhardt could understand Demosthenes' last stand against Philip II of Macedon (Johann Droysen could not), and yet he soberly saw the greater future in Macedonian rule (which Droysen glorified). Remarkably, he idealized Alexander, despite his usual aversion to men who achieve their fame by the use of force (*Gewaltsmenschen*). And, unlike many defenders of Greece, Burckhardt dwelled on the great virtue of Rome's conquest, the receptivity of its philhellenic circles, and Rome's beneficial role as the transmitter of Hellenic cultural elements to the Western world.

Surely, in Burckhardt's revisionism there is room for criticism. It is noteworthy that his treatment of the fifth century, for us so important, is in many ways an abbreviated one, except perhaps in the matter of the literature. Burckhardt, who uncovered so much of the agonistic quality of Greek life and its aristocratic value system, could have done more to trace the transference of aristocratic values to the collectivity of the polis and the importance of the agon for its objectives, and the greatness that Periclean Athens derived from this. The attack on sycophancy, *asebie* trials, and exploitation of the rich could have been toned down without weakening Burckhardt's basic indignation. While furnishing a deserved critique of the all-demanding polis, he also might have evaluated it more highly as the Greeks' particular form of collective organization, and one by which they gained an immensely higher cultural life than any possible from a tribal form of existence. Did he really understand what the polis as a positive reality meant to such a sober mind as Thucydides? A richer view of the problems could have been had from a more explicit elaboration of the disparity between the polis ideal and its totally insufficient economic base for realizing this ideal, especially in its democratic form. Burckhardt's exceptional pessimism about the modern state in some ways stood in the way of his vision of the polis.

What, ultimately, should one do with the philologists' condemnation of Burckhardt's book? It is false to maintain that Burckhardt made *no* use of modern scholarship, at least that available by the 1870s, the time of his work on these lectures. When the book appeared around 1900 there was, of course, a great deal more that he had not used. He read the publications of those academies of which he was a member. It was, however, his deliberate choice to concentrate on the sources, and he used them comprehensively. Very little of his treatment and interpretation of the respective subject matter would have been different, for instance, if he had indeed read

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Flach's 1879/80 refutation of the authenticity of Eudocia's *Violarium* and thus had decided not to use this late Byzantine source at all. Even if one multiplies such philological errors and omissions a hundredfold, by avoiding them Burckhardt would not have given us a fundamentally different history. Of course, it would have been better if he had avoided errors and if his aversion to the *viri eruditissimi* had been more tempered.

But it also would have been better if a figure of the stature of Wilamowitz would have tried to understand the historian whose work he judged so harshly (presumably after reading only the first two volumes). For Burckhardt was driven to his work by a deeply felt historical motive. He needed to derive, for himself and in his own fashion, a vision of the Greek world as Greek man had experienced it. In one way it was more important for him to see what Sophocles thought about a Greek matter than to determine whether Sophocles was altogether right in reaching his conclusion. Such a historical objective has its dangers, and it ultimately does not free the historian from the obligation to find out whether Sophocles was right; but the objective also has a justification that a critic should admit. What Burckhardt had felt as a personal need, he also turned into an educational task: to try to persuade educated persons to involve themselves in the effort of uncovering, in the totality of Greek life, a life-sustaining part of their own tradition. Burckhardt said of all his work that it should only be seen as an essay. Actually, the act of hubris that lies in all his teaching even exceeds the supposed hubris of the *Griechische Kulturgeschichte*, for he regularly taught the whole history of the West, in one form as cultural history and in the second form as art history (at a time when art history hardly existed as an academic subject). But in all the Jacob Burckhardt essays lies the same virtue: to take seriously the task of understanding ourselves as historical beings, of gaining and keeping alive, and of drawing a sustenance from, our relations to the past. In this sense his drive to the a priori quite impossible tasks of cultural history as history of cultural wholes rests as deeply in human needs as does our urge to know something as precisely as possible. This first need had best be respected thoroughly, and humbly, by the specialist. Perhaps the then very old Wilamowitz felt such a need when he stated in a note to the introduction to the second volume of *Der Glaube der Hellenen:* "I had no more time to deal with the modern opinions," lamenting at the same time that at his age he lacked the courage for needed revisions.

What Burckhardt gave us, despite its defects, remains something very impressive. More profit is to be found in his overview of the Greeks than in any such later work. He was a wise man who tried his hand at an impossible task; Johan Huizinga called him the wisest mind of the nineteenth century. And the wisdom in his book is still of value even for those who know many more details than he could master.

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MEMOIR

World War I

A Frenchman's Recollections

FRANÇOIS CARLOTTI

As an American historian of eighteenth-century France, I work at a great distance from my subject. It often seems beyond my reach, separated from me by a foreign language, two centuries, and three thousand miles of ocean. Not long ago, however, a fragment of French history landed on my desk and made me see things in a new light. It was a letter from a retired civil servant, François Carlotti. He had stumbled upon something I had written; and as I seemed to be interested in his country, he thought I might want to read an essay that he had composed for his family and friends. The essay arrived a few weeks later, carefully written out in a small, round hand, which had been formed in the schoolrooms of the Belle Epoque. After reading a few lines, I found myself swept up in an intensely French vision of French history, one marked above all by the trauma of the Great War. That view of events may be as important in its way as the events themselves. In any case, I think it worth reproducing here, even though it is only an old man's recollections of what he saw as a small boy, rather than a report from the trenches.

Monsieur Carlotti informed me that he was born in Auneau, a small town fifteen kilometers west of Chartres, on May 15, 1907. His father, a doctor, had immigrated from Corsica. His mother was the daughter of a notary. He attended local schools until 1917, then studied for his baccalauréat at the Collège Stanislas in Paris. After a stage as a clerk for a notary in Chartres, he did his military service in Morocco from 1927 to 1929. He worked for an insurance company in Paris and completed his education by obtaining a bachelor's degree in law and diplômes d'études supérieures in public law and political economy. After passing a civil service examination, he entered the municipal administration of Paris. Mobilized in 1939, he was captured, escaped, and volunteered to fight in the "Poches de l'Atlantique" in 1944. He retired in 1971 and now lives outside Paris in Le Plessis Robinson.

—Robert Darnton

The reckoning is quickly made: for the sixtieth anniversary of 1914, a single article.

In the France of today the immense army of those who gave their lives in what was the "Great War" count no more than their weight in ashes.

But the articles, studies, analyses, declarations, interviews, etc., devoted to the thirtieth anniversary of 1944—I cannot count them. And then there is television, radio—a flood.

Perhaps that is what one now calls grandeur.

And then this morning I woke very early with three names turning ceaselessly in my head, names that recalled nothing at all: Auguste, Désiré, Marcel . . .

Suddenly, in the sovereign clarity of dawn, it all came back to me in a flash and I saw them again, all three of them as they were sixty years ago, laughing in their sports clothes.

So I set myself to put down for my own children the memories of a child of that far-off time, so that those boys I had known should survive for another generation.

For men only truly die when there is no one left to evoke their memory among the living.

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I

Where did you fall, you wonderful dragoons?

These dragoons are for me a luminous memory from childhood that history would soon envelop in a wreath of mourning. The little town where I was born, on the edge of the Beauce and the Île-de-France, lay empty in the furnace of an August noon. My six years, newly achieved, had won me some commission, I no longer remember what, and I had just arrived at a crossroads when, suddenly, over there by the station, three glittering troopers galloped up.

In the time that it took to distinguish their helmets, their mounts, their lances, they were on me, and I was surrounded. One of them, the one without a lance, leaned forward in his saddle and challenged me. Between the pawings of the horses and the jangling of the swords, I understood that they sought the way to a neighboring village.

Wild with pride, standing on tiptoe, with outstretched arm, I shouted out the directions they wanted. In a single movement they were gone, disappearing, already at a gallop, round the corner of the street in a sun-shock of dust.

Where did you fall, *beaux dragons, beaux dragons* of 1913?

Was it the next summer under the great sun of Charleroi, in the mad charges against the machine guns where the hussars of Rambouillet, the light cavalry from Vendôme, the dragoons and *cuirassiers* of Chartres, a whole division of cavalry, was sent to the slaughter?

Or was it later, unmounted, caught unawares, in the filth of the trenches under the blue horizon of an innumerable sacrifice?

Or was it, at the very end, in one of those dawn attacks, a necessary prelude to the next victory when the men detailed for the "first wave" stared out all night from the forward trenches, not daring to exchange a glance because they knew that none of them would live to see the sun rise?

Where did you fall . . .

I do not know, *beaux dragons,* but the memory of you has never left me.

Time has passed; the world has changed. Foreign armies have trampled down every patch of the soil of France for which you gave your lives. The invading tanks have obliterated the traces of your glory, the tanks of the liberation have erased the marks of your sacrifice.

Time has passed and the world has changed.

The little station is closed. The fields, ploughed by tractors, know the horse no more. Trapped beneath the tarmac, the dust of the road no longer rises in the sunlight.

And yet, *beaux dragons,* when the summer leads me back sometimes to the town of my childhood and I stop at the crossroads, I always hear, far off from the plain, the echo of your heroic gallop.

II

Chérie has gone.

First, that stifling Saturday, when nothing moved in the town until the evening trains from Dreux, from Chartres, others from Orléans and Vendôme, trains that spilled a wave of men into the streets, unending and silent, so that when two or three drunks shouted "A Berlin!" no one heard them.

And then that Sunday, the houses hiding behind their closed shutters, as though refusing to recognize the posters that the town clerk had pasted up early in the morning on the door of the *mairie* and at the crossroads—"General Mobilization."

And then all those men left by the evening trains, leaving behind the distracted families who had seen them to the station.

On Monday we got the notice of the requisition of Chérie.

She was a fine Anglo-Norman mare that my father had bought two years before to replace Bayard, the great black horse that had become quite unmanageable.

It's true that to make the daily round of his patients my father had used a car for ten years at least, but it was a fragile, capricious machine. When it broke down there were few men who could sound its organs or cure its ailments. For that, one had to carry it all the way to Chartres on a brewer's dray, drawn by two horses. The whole region talked of it. When the car came back under its own power, no one took the slightest notice.

And then punctures posed endless problems—at night it was almost impossible to change a tire.

So my father always kept a horse, and it paid him to do so. Us too.

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Because, although the car was fun, with its backfires, its sudden leaps forward, its clouds of dust, and sometimes at night the marvelous light of the acetylene lamp that picked out fairies at every corner of the wood, nothing was worth so much in our eyes as the cabriolet, perched on its high wheels, with its vast hood and broad apron of black leather. But, above all, its horse that trotted softly between the shafts, the swishing of its tail, the cocking of an ear, the tossing of its mane; all this animal vitality thrilled us more than any machine. Besides, horses were kings of the countryside: horned beasts counted only for milk and meat. In our neighborhood there weren't as many as three teams of working oxen.

As the region produced no horses of its own, we brought them in from outside, and we brought the best: Percherons for the plough, Boulonnais or Ardennais for the carts and wagons, Anglo-Normans for tubs and traps, Tarbais for riding. For the poor and those scrubbing a living, the Breton had to serve as a maid of all work. Even the owner of a nearby château was driven to his Saturday train to Paris in a little *voiture* drawn at a gallop by four tiny shaggy ponies from Scotland.

Every year at the end of September the horse dealers brought their squadrons to the great fair at St. Côme from all over the place, even sometimes the little jennets from Spain, russet red with their tails plaited and with *pompons* on their ears.

As for us, we were happy enough with our Anglo-Norman, so shining and elegant in her coat the color of newly baked bread, with four white spots, one on her forehead and three on her fetlocks.

It was always an occasion when father took us out with him. But certain trips were special—above all, in the summer months, the run over to a hamlet not far off on the other side of the little valley. We trotted along beside the meadows that ran down towards the brook, bordered by magnificent beeches where a population of pigeons made their world. At the bottom there was a footbridge for pedestrians, but vehicles had to use the ford; and even if the water only reached to the horses' knees, it was still always an adventure that made our hearts beat faster.

And then, towards Christmas of 1913, we had an extraordinary expedition in the night. Woken with a start by a boy who had dashed up on his bicycle and was clinging, gasping, to the door bell, telling of a woman seriously ill far away in the country, a good six miles, we were carried off by father.

The frozen plain was completely white, the road covered with snow and difficult to make out, but between the clouds a patch of star-filled sky stood guard over us. In the over-arching silence the rhythm of the trotting mare cradled me, my nose buried in the nap of the rug, and, sometimes, when we ran near a farm, without even seeing it, I thrilled to the long howl of a dog as if in his voice all wild creatures had found a way back to the land they once possessed.

Now in front of our house, on a sunny summer's morning, I was holding the halter (our young groom had returned home to take the place of a *mobilisé*) as we waited for the requisitioning officer. I talked softly to Chérie to reassure her, but, though usually so calm, that morning she seemed uneasy.

Then they came—the vet, the *brigadier de gendarmerie*, and a martinet who was all trimmed with gold braid and who seemed to be in charge.

They talked with my father while they examined the mare: I ran her along at a little trot and then led her back towards them.

The brigadier, with his awful Bas Perche accent, said to me, "She'll cer'nly go to an offser"—"and an artillery officer" cut in the little martinet. This only made matters worse. It was none of the gendarme's business. Would a grown-up boy of seven cry like a child?

I hugged Chérie's muzzle and passed my hand for the last time across her golden flank, and they led her away, and her whinnying completed my undoing.

Chérie had gone.

I knew at once that she would never come back. But it took me a long, long time to understand that a whole world had gone with her.

III

About the fifteenth of August a rumor went round that mysterious trains were passing through the main station in the night on the line from Paris to Tours down there in the plain nearly two kilometers away. And very

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soon we learned that they were loaded with wounded soldiers.

When evening came, after the younger children had been put to bed, mother shook us by the shoulder, my elder brother and me, and said, "Boys, we must go to them."

And armed with pitchers and jugs we took to the road this warm summer's night where, far away, a clear swatch of sky showed us Paris.

For an age we waited on the platform, but the station officials remained calmly formal: "We have been told there will be a train, and one has passed through each evening this week." At last the headlight appeared at the opening from the hill, a train such as I had never seen, wagon after wagon, interminable, more than sixty goods wagons. When at last it came to a halt, we could see the glow from the engine on the level crossing while the tail of the train was still lost in the woods.

Suddenly an immense groan went up: "Water, water." Our jugs and pitchers were empty in no time. Then, quick, a dash to the pump, a refill, and handing the water round and back to the pump. Panting, dripping, we made seven or eight round trips before the train, as slowly as it had come in, rumbled off into the night. The crying had not ceased. "Water, water," came the cries, stronger than ever, demanding and desperate.

The next day more people came from the town and even from a neighboring village. The train stayed longer, longer, and we made I don't know how many round trips, and as we returned home, I clung exhausted to my brother's arm, stumbling all the way.

And so it was every evening. We never knew how long the trains would stay. As soon as they arrived we had to dash to work at once. Sometimes the wagons were open and we saw men sitting about on the straw, able to move or to stand up. At other times we had to arch our backs to slide open the heavy doors, to seek out helpless men on the bloody floor and to heave ourselves inside to give them a drink. Often the opening gave vent to a frightful stench of urine and excrement and gangrene that made us recoil. But we had to go on as best we could, even at the risk of vomiting afterwards because the pleading never ceased: "Water, water." The pleas never ceased even when, sometimes, a terrible cry cut across it: "My leg, my leg—for God's sake take off my leg."

Sometimes a wagon remained silent. Then mother, with a finger at her lip, would whisper, "Quiet, my sons, they are asleep," as we passed on to the next truck. The voice of my mother was so tender that only when I reached the state of man did I know that from that sort of sleep there was no waking.

IV

In the first days of September the anxiety became so oppressive that even we children felt it. From the mist of the official communiqués scraps of truth emerged. And then everywhere, on every week, the flood of refugees came closer—from the north, from the Somme, from the Oise. They had left with the retreating army or even when they had heard, still far off but quite clear, the sound of the guns, still a day's march away.

Then the veterans of 1870 began to stir their memories of Sedan, the retreat, the snipers of Châteaudun, the army of the Loire, the battle of Patay. My grandmother, who had been thirteen then, recalled the arrival of the Prussians at Neauphle-le-Château, the white uniformed *cuirassiers*, the Uhlans, the long occupation during the siege of Paris, the humiliation made the more bitter by being so close: the proclamation of the German Empire in the *Galerie des Glaces* in the palace at Versailles.

We learned that all of the recruits hanging around at the base at Chartres had been called together and sent forward as reinforcements. The trainloads of wounded had stopped coming through.

Every day the anguish weighed more heavily on us. The refugees had moved on, going south. Rumor had it that people in the town had made off to their cousins in Orléans.

For myself, I was quite calm. Ferreting about in the loft, I had found a sword, very old and rusty, but so broad and heavy that I knew that no Uhlan could withstand it. I awaited their arrival without fear, firm in the knowledge that they did not know where my sword was hidden.

For two or three days it was as though all that remained of life since mobilization had been suspended.

And then, suddenly, one morning out of the

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blue, the news broke, spread like wildfire, and was confirmed: Victory! A great victory! The armies of Germany had been defeated and were in retreat.

Ah yes! The victory of the Marne, the miracle of the Marne. After a sudden accumulation of mistakes by the German commander, the French army, recoiling for a month in defeat after defeat yet suddenly capable of a reversal of fortune in a heroic about-face—these things that had never been foreseen in any *Kriegsspiel*—had ended in this victory, had carried off in defiance of history a victory that changed the course of history itself. So, with many precautions and some regret, I put my sword back in its corner of the loft.

But the victors of 1940 had little difficulty in finding it. They had not even bothered to carry it off as a trophy. I found the hilt in the garden.

V

The first leaves fell at the end of October.

After the defeat at the frontiers, the retreat, the miracle of the Marne, the stabilization of the line in the trenches was necessary to give France time to recover her balance.

And then the High Command and government, appalled by the losses that surpassed imagining, probably found themselves little disposed to reveal the truth.

Up to this point we had only had news of those wounded who, evacuated to the interior, had succeeded in getting a letter or a message through, and they were not many. One had lost a leg and another had been hit in the stomach. We had showed them much sympathy, them and their familes. We should soon envy them.

When the two gendarmes who had stayed at headquarters started to go on their rounds with the official notices, "Died on the field of Honor," a terrified silence fell on the town, the villages, and the hamlets.

Gustave was killed, the little clerk who had once worked for my father and who had looked so handsome in his cavalryman's uniform.

Arsène, Alcide, Jules, Léon, Kléber, Maurice, Rémi, Raoul—all killed.

Georges, the son of the fat ironmonger in the marketplace, who had studied in Paris and come back with advanced ideas—talking English, putting up little hurdles in the field to jump over as he ran, teaching the boys to play with a queer sort of ball that wasn't even round—killed.

Alphonse, Clothaire, Emile, Etienne, Firmin, Marceau, Raymond, Victor—killed, killed, killed . . .

The grief was often the more terrible because in most cases it was an only son.

And then there were the three Cochon brothers.

The Cochons were one of those families of small market-gardeners who grew their crops by the banks of the river. Every morning, the wife threaded on her shoulder straps, took up the shafts of the enormous wheelbarrow, and set out through the town to sell her mountain of fresh vegetables while her husband stayed home working in the garden.

Tall, spare, bony, mother Cochon was always the first to set out and the last to return. She had four men in the house.

The eldest daughter, married to an employee of the railway from far away, had made her home with him there in the Capdenac region where he had a good job.

The father remained at home with his three sons, who had been born one after the other within the space of five years. The three boys had all done very well at school, while also giving a helping hand at home when required. They had passed their leaving certificates before rejoining their father to toil with him from dawn to dusk.

Yet, despite all their work, their plot of land did not suffice to provide a livelihood for the whole family, and, in turn, one or two of the boys went to work for wages. They were not living as lodgers, like Belgians or Bretons who, at St. Jean, poured from the trains in serried ranks with their round hats and their clogs, their working boots slung round their necks—no, they worked as neighbors who were well favored, eating at their master's table. These Cochons were good boys who would never have worked less than their father.

Happy lads, not bothered by jokes on their name, always the first to sound the trumpet and bang the drum of the town band, first over the parallel bars or the vaulting horse, or leaders at the dance in the *mairie* on holidays.

The father died while the eldest boy was away doing his training. The other two boys

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slaved away in the garden, working all the harder because the first born did not return home when the youngest son left. And after his three years' service, this youngest son faced mobilization and war.

When the gendarmes arrived that morning, Mme Cochon received them standing, with the one word: "Which?" "Auguste," replied one of them and laid the little notice on the table.

"Ah, Auguste, my first born, my strongest and my bravest." A slow shudder passed across her face, but she didn't flinch.

And then, as the gendarmes stood their ground, shifting from one foot to the other, she looked them full in the face, till one of them, gathering all his courage, managed to say, "And Désiré," putting the official notification on the table as he left. "Désiré, my most handsome, my most gentle, the golden-haired one." Now she trembled from head to foot, murmuring, "Auguste . . . Désiré . . . Auguste . . . Désiré . . . ," ever more softly, as though she was clasping them.

When the gendarmes returned, a month later, she turned towards them from her seat in the corner of the fireplace without looking at them and asked: "Is it Marcel?" They bowed their heads, unable to speak.

"Ah, Marcel, my baby, my last, my dearest, O Marcel." And then suddenly a terrible cry rent the air and carried down to the river. "Marcel, Marcel. Now there are no more Cochons."

Without hearing, the gendarme forced himself to read the paper. "Cochon, Marcel, sergeant, infantry . . . heroic conduct . . . citation . . . *croix de guerre*." She repeated her crazy, despairing threnody, "No more Cochons, no more Cochons."

From that day she hardly ever went out except to walk to her husband's grave. Those who met her would often hear her muttering, "No more Cochons . . . there are no more." But no one ever saw her cry.

She died at the onset of winter.

And there were still four years of war to come. The long hopeless agonies in the military hospitals, the boys of *classe 16*, called up at eighteen, who would never see their twentieth year, men who were wounded three times, bandaged up, nursed and healed, who returned yet again to the line never to return, the atrocious deaths in the gas attacks. There was the terrible winter of 1916–17 when even wild animals were frozen to death; and the insane spring offensives of 1917 when for a moment one thought oneself back in the bloodiest days of the summer of 1914, when training regiments were rushed into the line to plug the yawning gaps that held fast, never bending under the shells and the hail of the machine guns. The Americans arrived, the diabolical long-range guns shelled Paris, the last great German offensive began, which again reached the Marne, and the final victorious counter-offensive was launched.

There was the great Roger who fell on November 8.

When it was all ended and there was no family left to ask for the return of their corpses, they remained on their battlefields—the three brothers, with the vast army of shadows in the great military cemeteries, neat and orderly where they rest, hidden forever, the bravery, the gaiety, the youth of this people of France, who were—like the men of Athens before them—the adornment of the world.

VI

Usually there is just a little monument in the village square, or sometimes a simple plaque in the walls of the church or the *mairie*.

It is there that I found them, among all the others: the three Astier of Saint-Chaffrey, the three Blanchaud of Le Plessis Robinson, the four Rodocanacchi of Cargèse, the three Blanloeil of Chatillon-sur-Sèvre, the three Lebrun and the four Fajet of Gallardon.

Brothers? Cousins? I don't know, but it was a common blood that had drained out of them.

Above all, at Père Lachaise, the great avenue that rises into the Parisian sky. To the left is the monument to the colonial campaigns, a stone column guarded by four bronze soldiers, a marine, a colonial infantryman, a *légionnaire*, and an African rifleman, surrounded by an imposing grille.

And on this screen, in serried ranks, simple enamel plaques with a name, a place, a date. Some plaques called back encounters in the last century, in Madagascar or Tonkin, but most of them recalled the Great War. And no doubt some of the plaques were for the *disparus*, those who died twice because their

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remains were never recovered and their bodies found no resting place. Because, of the battles listed many were hells from which no traveler ever returned: Éparges, Craonne, Massiges, Moulin de Laffaux, Bois des Caures.

Every year there are fewer, but always they are there, the November chrysanthemums lining the length of the screen around the monument. The falling leaves of the autumn willow lay a carpet at the feet of the bronze soldiers. In one corner a little ivy plant has succeeded in insinuating itself, and a gentle moss grows round the edges of the plaques.

Last spring, they washed the monument, scraped the stone, swept up the leaves, burnished the statues.

And carried away the plaques.

VII

Was it in 1954 or 1955 that I spent a fortnight's holiday in the Alps above Briançon, up where the last lavender reaches? I no longer remember.

The craze for winter sports was already beginning to bring great changes. Not far from the traditional village, under the hood of its roofs, a brand new hotel had just opened with several shops and a restaurant that in winter would become a nightclub. The whole lot was built no doubt by men from down there, from Marseille, from Aix, from Lyon, even from Paris. Keeping to themselves, the locals pursue their country callings: a few goats, chickens, a hutch full of rabbits, here and there a cow, the old women fussing around them, or bending all day over their sickles or hoes or forks, all dressed alike with their grey shawls and broad blue aprons over their black dresses.

The contrast is striking, the opposition compelling.

But I understood it all when I went to the village from which these little hamlets stem and saw the war memorial for 1914–18.

Fifty-three names.

All through the war, it was the Alps, along with Lorraine, Brittany, and the Vendée that had provided the French army with the core of its elite troops, its assault troops, and their losses had been heavier than the losses of other regions.

I knew about this because I had read about it, and now I saw.

So it was that, when the development of winter sports suddenly fertilized this desolate land, men had come hurrying in from all over to exploit it because in this spot there remained nothing but a handful of women.

And these old women with the gray shawls—these who had been twenty in 1914 were the *fiancées*.

Others had known the love of a husband, the comfort of a fireside, perhaps the good fortune of a child. And after they were gone, a widow's pension, the reserved occupations that drew them into the towns.

But for these—nothing.

A dance or two on holidays, a few stolen kisses and then the waiting for the shot, far away in Champagne or Argonne, which severed two lives at a single blow.

Nothing. Not even the official notification, not even the mourning worn by those who carried his name.

These vestal virgins of memory, they had set their lives in the ways of yesterday as if they had the power to call back the lover who would never return.

And so it was, day after day, year after year. No novelties, no changes that went on all around them—ski runs, *téléphériques*, bars, hotels—nothing could reach the world where they lived. And then, very quietly, one by one, they began to slip away.

How many remain now, in their eighties? Who knows? I have never been back to Chantemerle.

But I know that when the last of them dies a whole age of France will have gone forever.

Monsieur Carlotti's essay and Robert Darnton's note have earlier appeared, in French, in the Fall 1984 issue of *French Historical Studies* (Cincinnati, Ohio). The essay was translated by H. G. Pitt.

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From the North

CHRISTOPHER DE VINCK

Before we stepped into the summer cottage
My father and I leaned back upon the
Grass to guess the direction of the next
Falling star.

I do not know much about constellations
Or the fortunes hooked to each.

I do not know if God chose
To keep earth in one position.

That night, with all the world's weight
To our backs, and the arch of the universe
Above us, my father in that hidden season
And I stopped time between us.

"There, Chris! From the north!"

A flare and streak of light which I
Still keep in all that I am and in
All that I wish to teach my children
Before they sleep: "From the north."

CHRISTOPHER DE VINCK's essays have appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*. His book *The Power of the Powerless* will be published this spring by Doubleday.

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Perverse and Inspired Genius

EMERSON R. MARKS

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE. Volume 5: LECTURES 1808–1819 ON LITERATURE. 2 vols. *Edited by R. A. Foakes. $75.* Volume 12: MARGINALIA, Part 2. *Edited by George Whalley. Princeton University Press. $90.*

There can be few more daunting enterprises of literary scholarship than the splendid *Collected Works of Coleridge* issued seriatim since 1969 by Princeton University Press. The latest additions are a second installment of the *Marginalia* and the ten series of lectures mainly on Shakespeare, Milton, Dante, and Cervantes. Since earlier editors had published most of what Reginald Foakes now presents fully and in better order, our knowledge of the author is expanded more by the *Marginalia*, of which only samples have hitherto appeared. These comprise a miscellany of reflections elicited in Coleridge's capacious mind during a lifelong perusal of more than 325 books, his own and other people's, which he defaced and enriched by some 8,000 notes scribbled in their blank spaces. Partly because the present volume takes us only through the *H*'s in an order alphabetical by author, readers will profit by reverting to the late George Whalley's superb Introduction in *Marginalia, Part I*, which along with much else provides a lucid evaluative overview of the whole.

Coleridge's jottings range in length from capsule essays to mere ejaculations like the "Whoo!!" provoked by Herder's comparison of Milton's prose to Klopstock's; or the volley of "No!"s fired off at C. F. Flögel's naming *The Merry Wives of Windsor* Shakespeare's comic masterpiece (II, 1063, 778). The latter vociferation is not the only *marginale* of Shakespearean appreciation omitted from Foakes's volumes, presumably because it was not uttered from the platform. Another ought to put the final quietus on the inane practice of turning out prose versions of the plays: "Surely a *prose Shakespeare* is . . . something not very unlike a square circle" (II, 75).

Coleridge, who rated himself "a very humble poet," set high value on his critical powers. It epitomizes his contrarious nature that he nevertheless took care to see his poems through the press but never got around to publishing the lectures on which his critical acclaim in large measure rests. Is Coleridge our greatest Shakespeare critic, as authoritative pronouncements attest? One is struck by the tenuity of the evidence preserved in the confusing array of preparatory notes for some lectures, imperfect versions of others taken down in shorthand during delivery, newspaper summaries, and the like, which editors have had to substitute for what never survived oral presentation. Of Shakespeare's thirty-seven plays, Coleridge discussed only eight, none of them exhaustively. By sheer good luck the fragmentary record does include major tenets of his literary theory. But the memorable explications of the plays are often tantalizingly brief, and engaging generalizations about Shakespeare's artistry—for example, that he "addresses us in words that enchain the mind" (I, 565)—cry out for elaboration.

Though the analogy is grotesquely ill-suited to all he was and did, Samuel Taylor

EMERSON R. MARKS is professor emeritus of English at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. His most recent book is *Coleridge on the Language of Verse*, and his work has appeared in *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, *Sewanee Review*, *Kenyon Review*, *Yale Review*, and other publications.

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Coleridge is in one respect the Falstaff of English letters. Paradox marks his character and career. Champion of duty and moral rectitude, he early abandoned wife and children and repeatedly lied to friends, publishers, and readers alike. His most ambitious projects, inspired by intellectual and creative endowments which his peers thought unsurpassed in his time, were frustrated by a temperamental sloth little short of pathological. "A subtle lynx-eyed intellect," Carlyle recalled of him, "tremulous pious sensibility to all good and all beautiful; truly a ray of empyrean light;—but embedded in such weak laxity of character, in such indolences and esuriences as had made strange work with it."

These contradictions emerged starkly to view in the lecture hall, where, Foakes reports, Coleridge's audiences were enthralled one evening and bored the next (I, xliv). His dissolute habits sorely taxed the patience of his brother-in-law Robert Southey and for a time cost him the prized friendship of William and Dorothy Wordsworth. Yet instead of being generally cast off as a hypocrite and wastrel he retained to the end the admiration and affection of many who knew him best. "Never saw I his likeness," wrote the grief-stricken Charles Lamb at the news of Coleridge's death, "nor probably the world can see again."

Named more often than any rival, at least in Anglo-American commentary, the greatest of literary critics, Coleridge could display strange vagaries of judgment. Though at least three of his poems are enshrined among the gems of English verse, he soberly disclaimed any right "to the name of poet, according to my definition of poetry." *Kubla Khan,* which Arthur Symons made the very touchstone of English lyric, its author valued more as a "psychological curiosity" than as a poem. His self-assessment as critic is closer to the verdict of posterity. Most people share his conviction that the best parts of *Biographia Literaria* are the chapters on poetic diction. But what are we to make of his opinion that his *Essays on Genial Criticism,* whose crucial points are only rephrasings of ideas in Kant's *Critique of Judgment,* was among the best things he had ever written?

The very breadth of Coleridge's intellectual receptivity makes his blind spots more flagrant than equal deficiencies in other major critics. An all-consuming Francophobia so warped his taste that he dismissed as pernicious almost the whole of French literature. Modern readers will be only the more discomfited by the reason he gave for the few exceptions (Rabelais, Descartes, Pascal, Molière, and Malebranche): an alleged predominance in these writers of the Gothic "blood" over the Celtic. While he commendably surmounted the insensitivity of his time to John Donne and George Herbert, Coleridge nurtured an animus against Samuel Johnson that sometimes erupted in gratuitous vituperation—"Dr. Johnson's pilfered brutalities of Wit"—offensive even in an age when the tide of reverence for the Great Cham was in full ebb. Wounded Johnsonians were probably unassuaged by the mental vigor that animated the denigrations. Coleridge's relatively mild reference to the great moralist as a "fellow," Foakes notes, once drew hisses from his audience (I, 138). Yet his eccentricities more often impressed discerning observers as defects of an excellence that the scrappy record of his platform demeanor dimly reveals. After attending one lecture made up almost entirely of tiresome digressions from its announced subject, Crabb Robinson wrote in his diary: "The man is absolutely incorrigible. But his *vitia* are indeed *splendida.*"

Then there is the still unresolved enigma of Coleridge's plagiarism, the unacknowledged use of mainly German material by a man whose learning and intellect should surely have armed him against the temptation. As J. H. Muirhead long ago observed, Coleridge "begged *in forma divitis,*" a rich man cadging a handout (*Coleridge as Philosopher,* 1930). His case is tangled with inconsistencies that at once blunt disparagement and dilute exoneration. Why in one place in the *Biographia* was he so careful to specify as literally translated from Christian Garve a paragraph quite essential to his analysis of poetic style? And if he intended deception, why, clearly worried as he was by possible charges of plagiarism, was he so careless about covering his tracks? As Thomas McFarland put it in his fine book on the poet's thought, he "presents us with the paradox of a burglar who seems more intent on setting off the alarm than on robbing the safe" (*Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition,* 1971).

These oddities in the man himself are, if anything, overmatched in Coleridge commentary. The plagiarisms were first exposed after

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The 1987 Phi Beta Kappa Book Awards

The Phi Beta Kappa Award in Science

CHEMICALS AND SOCIETY: A GUIDE TO THE NEW CHEMICAL AGE. *Hugh D. Crone. Cambridge University Press. $39.50. Paper, $14.95.*

Citation: During the past generation the relationships among science, technology, and society have come to be seen as increasingly problematic, and no subject has elicited a more intense and polarized discussion than the multifaceted impact of chemicals on society. Hugh Crone has made a distinguished and uniquely elegant and well-balanced contribution to this socially significant debate with *Chemicals and Society*, a masterly synthesis of materials from a dozen disciplines. He precisely and lucidly explains the ways in which the production and application of chemicals has altered and is altering the social and physical world in which we live. He has illuminated—and made accessible to the common reader—the complex of interactions between pure and applied science, between corporate interests and national policy, between public health and economic perception, between civil and military sectors. Most strikingly, he has managed to steer dexterously between the Scylla and Charybdis of polemical hand-wringing and interested apologetics. *Chemicals and Society* constitutes an admirable and enviable accomplishment.

The Christian Gauss Award

THE GODS MADE FLESH: METAMORPHOSIS & THE PURSUIT OF PAGANISM. *Leonard Barkan. Yale University Press. $30.*

Citation: *The Gods Made Flesh: Metamorphosis and the Pursuit of Paganism* is enormously ambitious and brilliantly achieved, and it offers its reader a great adventure. The book commands three ages, many languages, and a number of disciplines, especially literature and painting. With Ovid for his treasure house and the story of Arachne for his beginning and his key, the author shows us metamorphosis in its mysterious linkages and in its features of deception, alienation, libido, identity, fear, celebration, the importance of the female, and the creational, life-confirming aspect. As the ages shift, Leonard Barkan's emphases shift until he makes a fine conclusion with Shakespeare and theatrical art. This is a major work, rich and powerful, displaying erudition, clarity, and a powerful thesis.

The Ralph Waldo Emerson Award

ECOLOGICAL IMPERIALISM: THE BIOLOGICAL EXPANSION OF EUROPE, 900-1900. *Alfred W. Crosby. Cambridge University Press. $22.95.*

Citation: Alfred Crosby's *Ecological Imperialism* proceeds from a simple but powerful idea: that the avalanche of Europeans that settled over much of the temperate parts of the globe between the sixteenth century and the end of the nineteenth century cannot be understood without its biological dimension. Heretofore we were inclined to believe that the European settler succeeded because of human qualities, good or bad: pluck, skill, superior tools, rapacity, because God was on his side. Perhaps, says Mr. Crosby. But what the European settler really had on his side was all the associated animals, weeds, and diseases that he brought with him, wittingly or unwittingly. Ecological ignorance is Mr. Crosby's ultimate theme. Although historians knew fragments of this material before, Mr. Crosby's great contribution is to make us understand ecological systems whole. Secondly, he warns that human actions can still have massive unintended ecological consequences. Today the "Neo-Europes" contain most of the world's agricultural surplus, but they are coasting on past accumulation. To feed humanity will require "unprecedented ecological and diplomatic sophistication, statesmanship in farm and embassy, plus greatness of spirit." After reading *Ecological Imperialism* the reader will never again look at human experience on this planet in quite the same way.

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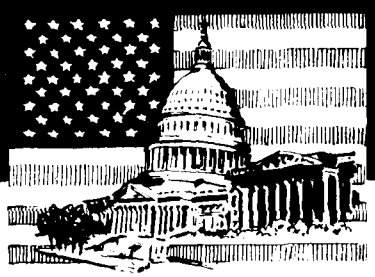

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his death by Thomas De Quincey, then more circumstantially by Scottish philosophic detractors, and later documented by the poet's gifted daughter Sara in her editions of *Biographia Literaria* (1847) and *Notes and Lectures upon Shakespeare* (1849). It is therefore surprising that discussion of Coleridge by the most respected Victorians hardly raises the issue. In Matthew Arnold's elegiac assessment (offered as a comparative digression in his essay on Joseph Joubert) intellectual dishonesty does not figure among the "many reserves" that tempered Arnold's praise for Coleridge as poet, critic, and philosopher. A longer and more perceptive appreciation by Walter Pater contains only an oblique reference to *alleged* plagiarism—not by Coleridge from Friedrich Schelling but by Schelling from Giordano Bruno. Prefiguring later palliations, Pater argued that the ideas shared by all three were no more than their common inheritance from long tradition. Lecturing on Coleridge in 1888, Leslie Stephen did convict him of having "adopted Schelling in the lump" in the *Biographia*. However, although he portrayed the author in far from flattering terms, Stephen refused to believe that he "stole his Shakespeare criticism from A. W. Schlegel." Stranger still is Symon's failure to acknowledge that Coleridge had incurred any obligation whatsoever in the course of producing "the most fundamental criticism of literature" ever attempted.

Most baffling of all, and least excusable by his own canons of scholarly responsibility, is George Saintsbury in 1904. "So, then," runs the summary verdict in his massive history of Western literary criticism, "there abide these three, Aristotle, Longinus, and Coleridge" (the last being clearly *primus inter pares*). Saintsbury's sole mention of any dubious dependence is a passing glance at Coleridge's *undue* anxiety in his Shakespeare lectures to deny indebtedness to August or Friedrich Schlegel. Given his towering knowledge of European criticism, Saintsbury must have known that Coleridge's concern was entirely justified in light of the parallels between their writings and his own lectures. Foakes's annotations amply support his frank avowal that Coleridge "certainly plundered" August Schlegel's Vienna lectures on dramatic art, drawing on them heavily for points of theory (I, lix, lxii).

The reasons why such refreshing candor has hitherto been less than universal among Coleridgeans are elusive. Some disputants have suspected a conspiracy of silence by British and American scholars, who, out of cultural chauvinism or misplaced piety, have been eager to protect their man against a lowered standing in literary history. In 1971 Norman Fruman predicted that a general acceptance of Coleridge as the shameless intellectual parasite depicted in his *Coleridge: The Damaged Archangel* would both deflate the author himself and precipitate a revision of a major literary epoch. But these confident expectations have foundered on the solid worth of Coleridge's achievement, indefeasible even after due subtraction of whatever is not his own. Almost two decades later his fame, resistant alike to well-founded reservation and sensationalist detraction, continues undiminished.

To ascribe this fact to Anglophone suppression of the damaging evidence is to ignore the high regard in which Coleridge has all along been held by Continental specialists who, well apprised of his questionable appropriations, have nonetheless rated him highly as literary theorist and thinker, though not as the systematic philosopher he himself aspired to be. Gabriel Marcel in *Coleridge et Schelling* (1909; reissued 1971) maintained that Coleridge's only debt to Schelling was a rational systematization of his ideas. Concealing nothing, Marcel's book includes an appendix of passages from the *Biographia* along with their sources in the German text. He joins other apologists in the surmise that Coleridge must on occasion have unwittingly transcribed Schellingian material that he had years earlier copied out in his notebooks because it so wonderfully accorded with his own thinking. Confirming Marcel, Paul Deschamps similarly argued that Schelling merely furnished his English colleague with "la formulation claire" of his personal discoveries (*La Formation de la Pensée de Coleridge*, 1964) and fully credits Coleridge's self-exculpations in the *Biographia*. Deschamps's insouciant dismissal of any ethical impropriety holds that Coleridge's silent adoptions from Schelling were permissible "borrowings" (*emprunts*) that "some people will take for plagiarism." An Italian Coleridgean, Elio Chinol (*Il Pensiero di Coleridge*, 1953), follows Marcel in printing five extended passages from Coleridge's *Logic* (then still in manuscript) along-

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side their virtually identical originals in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. Like some before him, he is forced to concede that Coleridge diverges from the German philosopher only in his concept of intuitive reasoning.

Chinol exemplifies the evaluative ambiguity that has bemused students of the more familiar commentary on Coleridge. He finds him to be among the most "fascinating, multiform, and enigmatic minds in the entire history of English literature." On the other hand he is downright severe on what with decorous Latin irony he styles the English thinker's "very odd way of going to work" (*ben strano modo di lavorare*). He complains of passages lifted bodily from Kant, often *verbatim* and without acknowledgment, eked out here and there with otiose interpolations. Why, Chinol asks, did Coleridge not represent himself simply as Kant's translator and interpreter rather than pass off "such a pastiche of translation, interpolation, and digression" as original work? Even in his attempt to transcend Kant's moral thought Chinol finds only a rhapsodic rehearsal of familiar themes from the second *Critique*. Yet, unaccountably, this unvarnished detailing of Coleridge's "odd way" failed to temper his prefatorial impatience with an alleged attitude of condescension in René Wellek's similar exposure, twenty years earlier, of incoherence and derivativeness in Coleridge's philosophizing (*Immanuel Kant in England*, 1931).

Nor have Coleridge's free and easy ways with the intellectual treasures of their countrymen even denied him German defenders. In the last century Alois Brandl's critical biography (promptly Englished by Lady Eastlake) presented Coleridge as an eclectic, to be sure, but not a man whom anyone careful with words would call a plagiarist. A modern study, Günther Lenz's *Die Dichtungstheorie S. T. Coleridges* (1971), like those noticed above untranslated and thus neglected in English-language discussions, exalts the English critic despite forthright admission of his German acquisitions. "The train of thought," Lenz writes of the *Essays on Genial Criticism*, "the terminology, the deductions stick closely in several places to Kant's *Critique of Judgment*." Nonetheless he discerns in Coleridge's treatment an independent "angle of vision" from which he sought to impregnate Kant's system with a livelier import by relaxing its conceptual rigor. Lenz argues earnestly that those who deny Coleridge systematic validity overlook his inexhaustible complexity. For crucial example, he sees in Coleridge's account of the creative imagination a rich nexus of variously derived insights which together ground his poetics in an indissoluble blend of experience, poetry, and philosophy unanticipated in earlier speculation and entirely overlooked by Coleridge scholars.

Another puzzling aspect of the plagiarism issue appears in recent scholarship. Though making no secret of Coleridge's failure to credit his sources, some interpreters treat the plagiarized material as though it were his own. Two editors of the *Collected Works* themselves supply examples. In *Method and Imagination in Coleridge's Criticism* (1969), James R. Jackson explicates chapter 12 of the *Biographia* as though most of it was not whole-hog Schelling. In Owen Barfield's *What Coleridge Thought* (1971), where this same chapter is identified as the very heart of Coleridge's dynamic philosophy, we are treated to a minute justification of Coleridge's choice of the word *prejudice* to characterize our unreflecting faith in objective reality. But Barfield's efforts must strike readers as a singularly ghostly kind of exegesis when they discover that the phrases "as nothing more than a prejudice, innate indeed and connatural" merely translate Schelling's "für nichts mehr, als für ein Vorurtheil [prejudice]—zwar für ein angeborenes und ursprüngliches," in the *Transcendental Idealism*, whence in fact the bulk of Coleridge's paragraph is literally reproduced. No qualified judge of their valuable work will suspect either of these men of disingenuous intent. Still, their procedures risk keeping alive suspicions of a scholarly cover-up sure to taint the case for Coleridge's deserved eminence.

As Princeton Press gradually makes available accurately edited texts of his previously unpublished or imperfectly published prose, it should become ever clearer that Coleridge's critical repute is best served not by minimizing his deficiencies but by dispassionate scrutiny of the merits they too often obscure. Whether the publication of the total oeuvre will finally settle the endlessly debated question of his philosophical standing I am not qualified to say. His stature as literary critic, however, there is hardly any longer room to doubt. For the best of what he wrote in that capacity there is simply no substitute. If his

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Shakespeare criticism were destroyed, the loss could not be repaired even from the admittedly brilliant appreciations of the very Schlegel he "plundered." The chapters on poetics in the *Biographia* are even less dispensable. Purely as theory, and especially in what De Quincey called the *quaestio vexata* of poetic diction, they remain unsurpassed. Coleridge's views on that issue are no mere manifesto of a period style, as Wordsworth's Prefaces to *Lyrical Ballads* so largely are; their enduring cogency has been reinforced by the finest poetic theory written since.

And so we reach the final anomaly, Coleridge's posthumous reputation as critic, something only the more wondrous if one believes his critical writing to be only "an inspired aside" from his philosophy, as Professor Jackson would have it. Here negative and positive phases lend special poignancy to the historic process. An almost total neglect of Coleridge's theory until well after World War I precedes a chorus of laudatory allusion, quotation, and explication since the 1930s. There had been, it is true, bits of Victorian lip service. Pater for one conceded, without specification, that it was in his poetic theory that Coleridge came "nearest to principles of permanent truth and importance." Other literary standard setters of the nineteenth century, however, including such admirers as Lamb, Hazlitt, Carlyle, and J. S. Mill, made little of the prosodic system of the *Biographia*. Mill, though the subject interested him deeply, and despite his exaltation of Coleridge as the century's one worthy philosophic alternative to Jeremy Bentham, like De Quincey actually preferred the Wordsworthian notions about poetic language of which Coleridge, in Herbert Read's excusable hyperbole, "made mincemeat" (*The True Voice of Feeling*, 1953).

The positive phase of Coleridge's critical fame has been noted for almost everything except what makes it unique. The striking fact is that his formative influence on modern poetic theory is a phenomenon without parallel in Western literature. No other critic, not Boileau, Dryden, Johnson, Goethe, the Schlegels, Arnold, nor Sainte-Beuve—the choice few of the type Remy de Gourmont signalized as "créateurs de valeur" in their day—provides a similar example. None of them, that is, emerged from protracted neglect to attain, a century after death, a prestige exceeding anything enjoyed in life.

In effect, Coleridge is a twentieth-century critic and has been so regarded by proponents of modern critical lore. Admittedly a few voices in the Coleridgean paean seem strident or off-key. Stanley Edgar Hyman's hailing Coleridge as the "father of modern criticism" and the *Biographia* as its Bible is belied by his own able survey, *The Armed Vision* (1948), which treats critical methods—sociological, Marxist, Freudian, and others—in which Coleridge's influence is minimal or nil. His thought has mainly sanctioned the New Criticism, and it is owing to the special éclat of that school until about 1960 that his formative role has loomed so large. Thus it was I. A. Richards as analyst of the poet's medium for whom Coleridge was no less than the Galileo of criticism (*Coleridge on Imagination*, 1934). Even more fulsome is a recent Coleridgean who sees in Coleridge the progenitor of the main Anglo-American critical approaches of the last 150 years and, to cap it all, of the current antagonism between deconstructionists and their opponents. Kenneth Burke, whose books bristle with references to Coleridge's works, possibly put his finger on one reason for this varied adulation when he pointed to the astonishing complexity of his mind (*The Philosophy of Literary Form*, 1941).

In any case, his unique modern standing rests on something firmer than the sands of intemperate encomium. Northrop Frye, whose erudition and acumen lend weight to the assertion, concluded in 1957 that Coleridgean criticism was by then as vital to students of critical theory as Aristotelian, Thomist, Freudian, Jungian, or Marxist (*Anatomy of Criticism*). No other critic, merely qua critic, has ever been ranked with such powerful shapers of our culture. The torrent of tributes to Coleridge's achievement by modern writers is headed by their own "créateur de valeur," T. S. Eliot. Eliot had for years evinced at best an equivocal attitude. There was not only his quite justified estimate of the *Biographia* as among "the wisest and silliest, the most exciting and exasperating books of criticism ever written"; he freely vilified its author as a corrupter of taste. Eliot preferred Dryden as a critic of poetry because Coleridge, despite his greater theoretical range, "disappears in metaphysic clouds." And so on. By 1956, however, all earlier disparagement dissolves in Eliot's declaration that modern criticism descends directly

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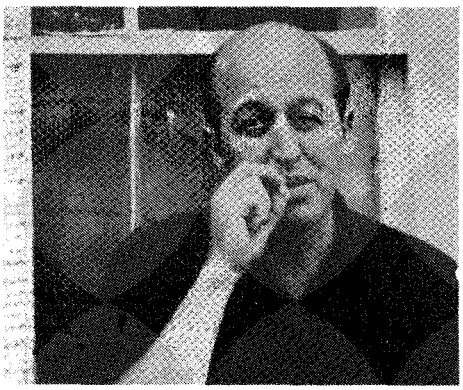

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from Coleridge, whose work has resisted the superannuation that has overtaken even Johnson's magisterial *Lives of the English Poets*, now appreciable only by "an effort of historical imagination" (*On Poetry and Poets*, 1957).

Roughly, one can separate the Coleridgean element in modern literary thought into two strands, which might, however awkwardly, be labeled the seminal-developmental and the neo-Coleridgean. To the first belong preeminently, Burke and Richards; to the second Cleanth Brooks, Robert Penn Warren, W. K. Wimsatt, and, at a greater remove, R. P. Blackmur and John Crowe Ransom. Herbert Read represents in uneven measure both strands of filiation.

The seminal-developers never in fact sound very much like Coleridge himself. Rather, they seize on isolated elements of his method, usually in its psychological aspect, to construct doctrines often quite disparate from his. For all their explicit obeisance, neither Burke nor Richards shares the master's views on the ontology or the function of poetry. Neither Burke's conception of symbolic action nor his notion of "dramatism" is Coleridgean. Burke's real resemblance to the man he enthroned as the greatest of all critics lies rather in a temperamental affinity to his "labyrinthian mind" (*Philosophy of Literary Form*), prompting him to explore with equal seriousness the momentous and the trivial. Burke's Coleridge is supremely the "inquiring spirit" who once declared it a philosopher's business to explain why almost everyone calls a toad ugly (*Marginalia, I*, 747).

Richards's situation is different. In 1924 his commendation of the *Biographia* as a "lumber-room of neglected wisdom" fairly inaugurated Coleridge's critical revival. But ten years later his *Coleridge on Imagination* misrepresented his mentor's principles in ways perhaps foreseeable when a professed Benthamite seeks "to interpret an extreme Idealist," as Richards candidly described his undertaking. The youthful Coleridge told his friend John Thelwall that his darling studies comprehended metaphysics, poetry, and "facts of mind," whereas Richards found only the last to be fruitful for his own radically psychologistic poetics. How much valuable theoretical cargo is jettisoned in Richards's reductive reading becomes clear when Coleridge's reconciliation of opposites, an ontological amalgam of structural, psychological, and mimetic ingredients, is boiled down to Richards's simplistic balance of appetencies experienced by readers of a poem. In much of his book Richards's vision of Coleridge's speculative forest is blocked by trees of his own planting.

The other group, Ransom, Warren, Brooks, Wimsatt, and Blackmur, I have called neo-Coleridgean because what they offer is less a restatement of ideas they first learned from his criticism than an independent confirmation of them reached through their own examination of poetry. The net result of this process goes beyond any mere tribute of influence. Its significance is enhanced by the fact that their endorsement of Coleridge's literary dicta stemmed primarily from their engagement with poets (Pope, Yeats, Eliot) radically discrepant from his own exemplars (Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth).

Just after his untimely death, a reviewer dubbed W. K. Wimsatt "a worthy heir of Coleridge." He was that—and something more. But the whole tenor of Wimsatt's writings, the terms he used and the data he invoked, suggest that the Coleridgean elements in his speculation would have been substantially the same had Coleridge never existed. The same is true of Ransom. In *The New Criticism* (1941) Ransom speaks of the democratic freedom of a poem's components within the whole they comprise, thus analogizing a beautiful poem to "a democratic state, which realizes the ends of a state without sacrificing the personal character of its citizens." Accordingly, the reader's pleasure comes from simultaneously relishing the parts and grasping the whole. Taken out of context, these remarks will seem a derivation, *tout court*, from the *Biographia*, so closely do they echo its famous definition of a poem as a species of composition that yields "such delight from the *whole*, as is compatible with a distinct gratification from each component part." But Ransom's virtually identical conception arises as a quasi corollary of his bold (and to fellow formalists unsettling) doctrine that poems are made up of logical structures and irrelevant textures (meter, rhyme, etc.), an ontology sharply at odds with Coleridge's holistic organicism.

The relation of the New Critics to their revered Romantic predecessor is one of mutual validation. Since Cleanth Brooks himself has affirmed his own central role in this validation, we might consider instead the more

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peripheral Blackmur. As propounded in *Language as Gesture* (1952), Blackmur's arresting image of gestural language, standing for the poetic mode of expression, was obviously induced from his sensitive readings of contemporary verse. Yet though his expatiation on this key metaphor of his aesthetics is practically devoid of Coleridgean terminology, it is no less fundamentally Coleridgean. Blackmur's verbal *gesture* is in fact an avatar of the term *imitation*, which, as distinguished from *copy*, Coleridge invoked to define the peculiar dynamic quality of verse as opposed to prose. And like Coleridge, who called his *imitation* "the universal principle of the arts," Blackmur wrote that "if gesture is of such structural importance in poetry as I claim for it, then the other arts should attest for it an equal importance"; and he proceeds to point out its manifestations in architecture, sculpture, music, acting, the dance, and painting. Only architecture, as I recall, is missing from Coleridge's otherwise identical list. Blackmur's insistence that there are "not two, or three, much less seven fundamental modes of imagination, but only one" restates a crucial item of Coleridge's aesthetic creed, in which the archaism *poesy* is revived to designate the essential unity of the fine arts.

Given the cast of his own thinking, Blackmur could not be long in recognizing Coleridge's intellectual kinship. Especially notable is his repeated citation of a phrase in the famous definition of poetry in the *Biographia*: "a more than usual state of emotion, with more than usual order." This formulation of the polarized creative imagination, memorable like so much else in Coleridge for its gnomic brevity, is most apposite to his view of meter, which, Blackmur told a Japanese lecture audience in 1959, still excels all later substitutes.

Blackmur's attraction to the *Biographia*'s metric theory stems from a shared intuition of poetry's quintessential power apparent in the subtle penetration of his critiques of Eliot, Yeats, Hart Crane, Wallace Stevens, and others. I don't recall that Blackmur anywhere cites Coleridge's radiant celebration of poets as "Gods of Love who tame the chaos." But his 1942 essay on Yeats climaxes in an abstract equivalent: "To create greatly is to compass great disorder." It expresses the insight that enabled him to honor Coleridge's emotion-order polarity as the "double condition" of the poet's way with words.

If the anachronism of Coleridge's posthumous presence is unprecedented, it is hardly mysterious. The best and brightest of our century could not help acknowledging in this perverse and inspired spirit a colleague who had given eloquent utterance to literary principles of their own discovering.

Individual Conscience

SEPARATE PASTS: GROWING UP WHITE IN THE SEGREGATED SOUTH. *By Melton A. McLaurin. University of Georgia Press. $13.95.*

Reviewed by HEINZ R. KUEHN

The days are gone when the civil rights movement gave expression to the deepest convictions of many blacks and whites and committed them in conscience to participation in the struggle for racial equality before the law. Today, that movement has become, under the umbrella of its achieved legal ends, a laborious, sometimes highly politicized, and always painful search for the still elusive solution to America's most distressing domestic problem. For this reason, the moment for the appearance of a book such as *Separate Pasts* is highly propitious because, without mentioning "the movement" or using the vocabulary that characterizes so much of the by now indeterminable literature on civil rights, it focuses the issue of relations between blacks and whites on the one factor on which ultimately everything converges that may be said or done to solve this problem: the experience, conscience, and attitude of the individual.

McLaurin's story is a simple one—refreshingly simple in our era conditioned to and numbed by superlatives—and adequately summed up by the subtitle, *Growing Up White in the Segregated South*. The setting is Wade, a village in North Carolina about sixty miles south of Raleigh, where in the 1950s, the time evoked by the story, some one thou-

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sand residents form an "almost perfect microcosm of the rural and small-town segregated South." The center of local commerce for blacks and whites, and a place of nightly social gatherings for white customers and salesmen as well, is the general store on U.S. Highway 301, owned by McLaurin's grandfather, where the boy spends much of his after-school time and which, as the grandfather ages, he virtually runs on his own from the time he becomes a seventh grader until he graduates from high school. Surrounded by the houses (ramshackle dwellings for the most part, really) of the black community, the store draws about half of its customers from that population. Adjacent to the store is the playground of the black elementary school, a sandy playfield (in contrast to the asphalt court of the white elementary school) "barren of grass, shrubs, and playground equipment, and framed by a row of privies announcing the building's lack of plumbing."

In somebody else's hands, this dreary scenario could have easily diminished the significance of this autobiographical account to a story of strictly local relevance, but McLaurin infuses it with light and shadows, with life, with symbolic meaning, and above all with that subtle play of union with, or contrast to, his characters that lifts an environment out of the role of mere stage or background and, by relating it to the inner life of the players, gives it a relevance as universal as human nature.

The players are, in the main, a handful of blacks, boys and girls, men and women, whose "appreciation as individuals [writes McLaurin] presented me at an early age with the complex intellectual and emotional dilemmas of segregation." That dilemma—adhering to the ideology and etiquette of racist dogma or taking the consequences of a gradual discovery of that dogma's intrinsic absurdity—is vividly described in single incidents and commonplace occurrences that force a boy at his most impressionable age to reflect on and eventually reject the veracity and validity of tenets in which he has been instructed from birth and that are upheld by those he respects and admires: the members of his family.

McLaurin, whether he stands behind the counter of the store dispensing soda pop, candy, or canned goods, or whether he is playing basketball on the playground of the black elementary school as a member of an integrated team, is at all times a keen observer of human nature and actions, and he reflects mercilessly. In vignette after vignette, we encounter all the basic stereotypes, prejudices, clichés, and assumptions elevated by a racist society to anthropological dogma and social norms sanctified by tradition. There is, early on, the incident that shatters his placid, unquestioning acquiescence in the racist norms that govern his, his family's, and his community's life. Attempting to inflate a flabby basketball, he suddenly realizes that his saliva has inadvertently mixed with the saliva of his black playmate, Bobo, and that "Bobo's saliva on the needle placed in jeopardy my racial purity, my existence as a superior being. . . . The needle . . . transmitted to me Bobo's black essence, an essence that degraded me and made me, like him, less than human. . . . I realized now that segregation was serious, as serious as life and death, perhaps as serious as heaven and hell."

There is Street, "the most intelligent person in the village . . . and the best read as well," who calls into question the assumption that whites are intellectually superior to blacks. There is Betty Jo who exemplifies "the ultimate temptation and the ultimate taboo" of interracial sex, "a horror that Wade's whites embraced as did southerners everywhere." There is Sam, object of a "nigger baiting" incident that serves to illustrate the guilt caused by the moral implications of the fundamental inequity in a segregated society and compensated for by whites with paternalism and "decent behavior" toward blacks.

There are other situations, other encounters, other issues, from that of the front seat of an automobile as "one of the most consistent and troublesome reminders of the ugly realities of segregation" to that of poverty as supposedly indigenous to black culture. Combined, these vignettes make up the story of a conversion. It is not the "Damascus-type" conversion—the lightning flash, the voice from heaven—that instantaneously turns Paul, the Pharisee, from a persecutor of Christians into a Christian missionary. It is instead the story of a conversion more common among ordinary (or, rather, on the issue of race relations, somewhat extraordinary) mortals, who through experience, reflection, open-mindedness, and, perhaps most important, intellec-

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tual humility change their minds and their attitudes on matters they believe to be essential to their self-identity. This makes McLaurin's slim volume persuasive and utterly believable.

The effect of *Separate Pasts* lingers long after one has read the last page of this remarkable autobiographical account. McLaurin, who is now professor and chairman of the department of history at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington, knew that his was the last generation of the segregated South. His story, however, is far from being history, confined in time and space to a little village in the rural South. It is, in essence, still the story of contemporary America everywhere, rural, urban, and suburban. It is, above all, a powerful reminder that neither rhetoric, nor legislation, nor political maneuvering will change human hearts and attitudes, but only that conversion which separated the past of a McLaurin from the past of those who remained spiritually, emotionally, residents of that Wade he had left and to which he could never return.

Church of the Sacred Goalpost

NEBRASKA FOOTBALL: THE COACHES, THE PLAYERS, THE EXPERIENCE. *By James E. Sherwood. University of Nebraska Press. $19.95.*

Reviewed by ROBERT B. HEILMAN

The author of *Nebraska Football* is an assistant professor of history at the University of Nebraska, and the dust jacket declares that the book is "more than a history." It is, however, less than a history. It is pretty much the annual press guide got out by every university and college with football aspirations, though here devoted mainly to past events (wins, losses, heroisms, etc.) described in roughly chronological order. There is no effort to go beneath familiar surfaces, or to seek out the wider relationships, organic developments, and meanings that ordinarily inform historical study. A glossy paper affair with about sixty illustrations (some very interesting), the book will ornament many territorial coffee tables.

It is a piece of sports journalism, celebratory rather than investigative. The author is never the sports-page curmudgeon or cynic or badmouth star, that standard member of the reportorial cast (at least in larger cities) whose role is to take strong positions, often apparently perverse, and inspire the flux of angry letters that one surmises aid circulation. Sherwood is simply the unquestioning rah-rah enthusiast, the feature writer sad over "The Bad Times" (more losses than wins), and glad over "The Glory Days" (more wins than losses). He has neither distance nor ironic sense; he does not notice the amusing implications of the Nebraska academic counselor's "struggle . . . to convince players that pro ball wasn't for most of them and that education was therefore a necessity."

The verbal style is journalistic, grade B. Sherwood regularly says "philosophy" when he means "view" or "opinion" or "operating rule." When he writes that Coach Dana Bible's "mind was his greatest asset," Sherwood means only that Bible had a hatful of psychological gimmicks to keep the boys hopping. The populist touch appears in such lines as "they sure did try" and "cheer the Huskers on to victory." Clichés are everywhere ("new worlds to conquer," "lives on in the memories," "lead the team to glory"), and a generalization often sinks into a truism: "College football involves the fans, the coaches, and the players." The author's grammar is insecure ("one of those who feels"); he lets initial elements dangle perilously; he is capable of downright solecism ("fewer number of coaches"), syntactic infelicity ("Along with a salaried coach, other changes were in the works"), and logical ineptitude ("An interim head coach is not one of the more prestigious positions"). He writes "travel involved with the football program" when he means "travel required by the football schedule." It is a pity that a university professor and a university press could not between them have managed a less flawed English.

It is easy to be snide. Still, bumbling and unsophisticated as it is, the book has a repre-

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sentativeness that is of some interest (one can expect other such proclamations of a regional sense of achievement). Sherwood's book speaks for a widespread sentiment—a certain kind of U feeling and of strong regional identification with it. The feeling is sometimes praised as a matrix of "community" otherwise not easily come by in a fragmented world, and more often damned as inappropriate in an institution formally committed to the activities of "mind." But in observing the "sentiment" or "feeling" or "emotion," which can heighten into "passion," I pursue not pros and cons but analogies. Some quotations by the author of *Nebraska Football* may give clues. Nebraska Coach Tom Osborne is reported to give his players this set of "four priorities" in the order of their importance: (1) God; (2) Family; (3) Academics; (4) Football. Some readers will hardly avoid thinking that No. 1 and 4 have, in some way, fused. A national sportswriter calls a Nebraska game "a happening that is nearly a religious experience." Another writer attributes to God the reflection that he has given "other areas of this country mountains, beaches, stuff like that. Everywhere I look, beauty." Hence God decides that he must even things up and arranges a special gift for Nebraska: football. He gave them, so to speak, one talent, and, having a better religious sense than the one-talent man in Matthew 25, they more than doubled it. It is not surprising that, when Nebraska beat Minnesota for the first time, another sportswriter asked whether this event was not "the dawn of the millennium."

The state in which I live is rich in "mountains, beaches, stuff like that" but also manages a fair amount of intensity about its pro and college teams. Football is evidently more than a counter to a deficiency index in the natural world. The analogy with religion may have some utility for understanding the situation. Of course, football seems to lack the metaphysical base that is a religious sine qua non; rather, it reflects that later stage of religious history in which the guardians of the metaphysical base tend to validate its asserted universality by worldly operations and to naturalize divinity in organizational structures. They practice "outreach," which means discomfiting pagans, dealing strongly with heathens if they persist in a sad bondage to false gods. Hence the Crusades, the intransigence of the Shiites, some of the motivations of the IRA. At this stage of cultural history, football comes into the picture. But its history really reverses cultural history: pragmatic institutional success occurs first, and, as it is extended, it begins to imply metaphysical validity and authority. Our team fights to ally itself and us with a luminous if imprecise transcendent reality. Hence victory is everything; hence it produces the joy of "God's in his Heaven, / All's right with the world."

As football triumph thus moves up in the hierarchy of folk significations, all methods are valid. We automatically laud the "toughest and meanest" warriors, as the Nebraska author regularly does, and regard the same type, on the other side, as demonic agents who deserve divine retribution, at least in the form of more fifteen-yard penalties. We love "enforcers," and suspect that "sportsmanship" is a pallid halfheartedness against the forces of darkness. Hence unwearied repetition of St. Lombardi's proverb: "Winning is the only thing." Hence he who asserts "It's only a game" is at best trivial and at worst a heretic. Hence, too, the institutions that are not distinguished in these Crusades take refuge in another mystical pre-eminence, the "Siwash experience," as it is now uniformly called wherever transcendence by uniqueness is aspired to or believed in. Of course, religious doubt is a familiar phenomenon. Could that explain those potted half-time commercials which, during the broadcasts of big games, assert the pure intellectual mission and fervor of the institutions whose warriors are doing mortal combat on the field?

The analogy with religion opens up another area of possible understanding. Religious visions take account of the dual nature of man, indeed, of more than one duality in this creature. Here I am concerned with the duality that can be described in literary terms—that is, man's tragic impulse and his melodramatic impulse. As tragic figure, man perceives his own responsibility for disaster; as melodramatic figure, he attributes disaster to others, defines them as evil, and fights against them. Guilt, the sense of having done ill, is very uncomfortable. Jews complain of it as a generic heritage, Catholics confess, and Protestants (both prelapsarian and lapsed) work it off through the modern industry of Protest—that is, conspicuous presumption against the

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wrongdoings of others, a route especially attractive when the wrongdoers are at great distances. Those bereft of ecclesiastical orientation spill it out to shrinks. Categories of guilt-treatment overlap, of course. Now football has made the religion-and-guilt problem very much easier than it used to be: it has greatly reduced the tragic view of life and enormously enlarged the melodramatic view of life, the sense of striving militantly against outer forces of inferior worthiness whose triumph would be well-nigh insupportable. Football does allow for an occasional spot of ritual penitence: the players may admit, "We didn't play good," and the coach may admit, "We were outcoached." But no one blinds himself, as Oedipus did; or goes mad, as Lear did; or executes himself, as Othello did. For the majority of participants and observers—the celebrants and the congregation—life is one big melodrama, all stress, energy, prayer, and faith committed to the local variant of *Carthago delenda est.* Thus the community proves itself. And if Carthage has a good day, and "we" lose, sadness and mourning press down a community that may include a whole state and maybe even some neighbors. After Ohio State lost to Indiana in October 1987, the Ohio State coach declared the occasion an all-time low in Ohio State football and, we infer, in the general psyche of the commonwealth. Rome has fallen; Jerusalem has been taken by the infidel.

Fortunately such disasters are infrequent when "our" forces are true to their talent, their discipline, their faith. For the most part we enjoy the delectable melodrama of triumph. And when it fails, all of us in the congregations of the faithful are free of painful tragic self-inspection: we simply enjoy the melodrama of blame, and murmur about the defects of generals and warriors. What we do is invoke the ancient religious practice of finding a scapegoat or scapegoats. We pack them off into the wilderness or outer darkness, and thus hope, with a new cast of bishops and acolytes, to strengthen our side in the battles against aliens. "Us" and "them" image the eternal Manichean struggle between good and evil.

Football seems now to involve a sense of a secondary reality, of something that makes it more than "just a game." I have been exploring the suggestions of others that the some

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thing more is of a sort that we find in religious experience. Man is incurably religious; if he does not find sound religions, he settles for inferior ones. But football is much too paltry, you say? Yes, yes, of course. But also, come, come. Think of the huge congregations of the faithful waiting upon the wisdom of Oriental gurus dazzling in Rolls Royces, and so laden with gold from the parishioners that they have profound income tax problems. Think of the millions contributing to television evangelists, who build ever more stately mansions by the sea.

The writer of these comments should identify himself, so that his biases may be known. He is neither defense attorney nor prosecuting attorney. He hopes not to be skeptic, debunker, earnest moralist, dour prophet, or happy voice of the status quo; but he hopes to be, instead, a relaxed onlooker, a temperate reporter. He likes to watch football, and is even pleased when local teams win.

Wanted: Democratic Babies

THE BIRTH DEARTH: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN PEOPLE IN FREE COUNTRIES DON'T HAVE ENOUGH BABIES? *By Ben J. Wattenberg. Pharos Books. $16.95.*

Reviewed by WILLIAM PETERSEN

" 'Birth rates' (or more precisely 'crude birth rates')," Ben Wattenberg informs his readers, "are simply the rates of birth per thousand in the adult population." Why is it, this reader responds, that someone has written a book on demography who does not know that all crude rates, the commonest and most elementary measures used in that discipline, are based on the whole population? I suspect that Wattenberg hopes his book will match the sales and presumed influence of Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb,* one of the more irresponsible of the several tracts of the 1960s spreading alarm about excessive population growth. *The Birth Dearth* is aimed at the lowest and thus, Wattenberg hopes, the broadest stratum of readers. Jargon is eschewed, and when a lonely technical term wanders in, as often as not it is a bit disfigured. Evidence has been garnered not only from the World Bank and a few demographers but from such authorities as Richard Threlkeld of ABC News, Erica Jong writing in *Vanity Fair,* and interviews with childless couples in *Newsweek.* Three out of the 182 pages of the book are given over to successive drawings of a python swallowing and gradually absorbing a pig—used as a metaphor for the semi-literate, who thus are supposed to gradually absorb the concept of a cohort.

A popular presentation of a complex social issue is not inherently deplorable. On the contrary. But this work is rather pop sociology at its worst, a presentation by an author not comfortable with his subject in a paradoxically condescending style.

The book's theme is that fertility in modern Western democracies has fallen below the replacement level and that, therefore, unless there is a sharp increase in the size of its families, the West will lose out to the Communist bloc and especially to the Third World. This thesis is two parts common knowledge to three parts unexamined premises and reckless extrapolations. Recent Soviet writings on the country's demographic future have mirrored Wattenberg's thesis on a national scale, expressing a fear about the way the contrast between declining Russian fertility and the continuing high rates in the Muslim sector will affect Soviet society. The notion that India or Indonesia, for example, will be more powerful if still more populous cannot be accepted without any supporting argumentation.

Several times in the book Wattenberg makes the point that the birth dearth (a phrase of which he is the proud father) is a phenomenon without precedent. In fact, in important respects the decline of Western birth rates in the 1930s was a forerunner of the current trend. Frank Notestein, a leading American demographer, propounded a theory that Western populations were in "imminent decline"; Louis Dublin, who headed the excellent statistical bureau at the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, toured the country appealing to groups of women to be fruitful and multiply. Governments ranging from democratic

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WILLIAM PETERSEN is the author, with Renee Petersen, of a five-volume *Dictionary of Demography.* His book *Ethnicity* is forthcoming from the Free Press.

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Britain to totalitarian Russia enacted pro-natalist laws that, in fascist Italy, as one example, discouraged celibacy and emigration, prohibited contraception and abortion, encouraged early marriage, and subsidized large families. In a detailed analysis in 1940 of several of these programs, David Glass, then the dean of British demographers, concluded that all such programs had failed with the possible exception of the one instituted in Nazi Germany, which combined a ruthless prosecution of abortionists with an upsurge of fervent nationalism.

In a chapter headed "Practical Plans," Wattenberg offers ameliorative measures, some echoing past failures, some interesting at least for their originality. Essentially, they consist in variations on the basic theme of "give women money. Lots of it, in order to at least partly compensate for lost earnings." He suggests that "real help" would be about $2,000 per year per baby. Or, as another proposal, corporations should be persuaded, or induced, to set up day-care centers for their employees, the cost of which (as Wattenberg does not mention) would be added to the price of the commodities they sell. More generally, social institutions should encourage marriage (for instance, of divorced persons), publicize as role models women who successfully combine careers with motherhood, perhaps even experiment with communal child care in the manner of an Israeli kibbutz. The one pro-natalist measure that has some wide support in the United States, a legal restriction on abortion, Wattenberg opposes on libertarian grounds.

According to detailed estimates by the economist-demographer Thomas Espenshade, the cost of raising a middle-class child from birth to eighteen years can be as much as $85,000. In such an amount, no governmental program is ever going to make a serious dent. In any case, the view that governments can buy babies, even when they are willing to pay dearly for them, has been proved wrong time and again. The international revival of fertility beginning in the 1940s, the famous baby boom, came not in response to state subsidies but almost in spite of them. In France, as a prime instance, the reversal started under the German occupation, when not only extras but bare necessities were at a premium. The one trend uninterrupted by the totally unantici-

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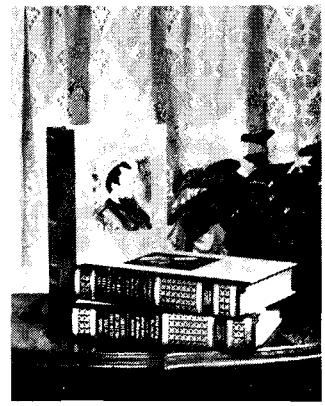

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pated baby boom was calls for remedial programs—changing only to how to achieve opposite goals from the earlier pro-natalism. In the United States books with titles like *Famine, 1975!*, organizations like Zero Population Growth and such government-sponsored entities as the Commission on Population Growth and the American Future all had their short life, brought to oblivion mainly because of the sharp and, again, unexpected decline in the American birth rate.

Even after the fact, we demographers have not put together a satisfactory theory of what determines such shifts in fertility and, thus, why our prognoses have been so consistently wrong. Technicians constructing population extrapolations have acquired a new and clearly appropriate humility. For example, the U.S. Census Bureau, while continuing to meet the still-increasing demand for future estimates, changed their designation from "forecast" to "projection" and then to "illustrative projection." Extrapolations to the year 2100, which Wattenberg uses consistently to bolster his apocalyptic thesis, hardly qualify even as good science fiction.

One salutary consequence of the shifts in Western fertility has been the development of improved techniques of analysis. When the population continues to increase even though families are small, it is because of the larger number of families, a reflection of a temporary bulge in the age structure. The measure of childbearing that Wattenberg uses throughout the book, the total fertility rate, was designed to adjust for such a lag. Defined as the sum of age-specific female fertility rates over the whole of the fecund range—say, from age fifteen to age forty-nine—it represents the average number of children that would be born to a woman assuming that the birth record of a single year is representative of the whole of her childbearing period. That assumption, however, is likely to be wildly off, since in recent years family formation has fluctuated more by the spacing of children than in their number. Women who want to combine careers with motherhood may postpone marriage, then first births, and then the completion of their families. Wattenberg's comment that "every year a woman is unmarried tends to lower the fertility rate because it further reduces the number of years that a woman is likely to bear a child" is relevant to the formation of families of ten or fifteen children, but not to families of two or three. The total fertility rate, in short, is both a measure of present fertility and a half-hidden—and often deceptive—prophecy of future fertility. If Wattenberg is aware of the ambiguity of such terms as "replacement" and "birth dearth," he certainly does not warn his readers against misinterpretation of his data.

It is nevertheless true that fertility in Western democracies has fallen rapidly in recent years and that this trend constitutes a serious social and economic problem. Indeed, it is a problem too serious to depend on a pseudo-solution from publicists with little taste for probing complexities. Someone interested in reading a responsible and reliable analysis should rather seek enlightenment from a volume that experts have written for the general public—Kingsley Davis, Mikhail S. Bernstam, and Rita Ricardo-Campbell, editors, *Below-Replacement Fertility in Industrial Societies: Causes, Consequences, Policies*, published both as a supplement to the 1986 volume of *Population and Development Review* and as a hardcover book by Cambridge University Press.

Cool Hand Socrates

THE FRAGILITY OF GOODNESS: LUCK AND ETHICS IN GREEK TRAGEDY AND PHILOSOPHY. *By Martha C. Nussbaum. Cambridge University Press.* $19.95.

Reviewed by CHARLES L. GRISWOLD, JR.

Philosophers have long been the objects of both wonder and suspicion. The wonder and the suspicion seem to have a common root—namely, the perception that philosophy resembles, as G. W. F. Hegel once remarked, "a sanctuary apart, and those who serve in it constitute an isolated order of priests, who must not mix with the world, and whose work is to protect the possessions of truth." Philosophers are thought to hold forth in a barely

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intelligible language peppered with unanswerable questions. Philosophers seem to mock the beliefs and practices of mankind and to praise the life of disembodied, intellectual asceticism. That anyone so seemingly profound could take so seriously a life thus understood inspires a certain wonder. At the same time, philosophers are suspected of destroying what people normally, and deeply, want to accept as a fulfilling and rich human life. Aristophanes' caricature of Socrates in *The Clouds* famously plays out this suspicion.

In *The Fragility of Goodness* Martha C. Nussbaum sets out to rescue philosophy not by defending philosophy-as-asceticism but by arguing that philosophy properly pursued supports the "richness and fullness in life" we want to affirm (*we* is an important pronoun in the book, and I shall return to it below). Professor Nussbaum does not attempt to set forth the immensely complicated discourse that would be needed to make the argument in its own right. Instead, she analyzes writings by important authors in the Western tradition who have held positions she wishes to attack and defend. In her view, Plato articulates the influential misconception of philosophy as life-negating asceticism; Aristotle articulates the true notion of philosophy; and both Aristotle and the tragedians present us with a picture of human life that accurately reflects, and respects, the human condition. Thus Aristotle and the tragedians form common cause against Plato and provide us with a useful answer to the question, as Nussbaum states it, "How can the human good be reliably good and still be beautifully human?" Nussbaum correspondingly argues that philosophers have much to learn from literature, and indeed that philosophers' long-standing denigration of literature (not to mention the other arts) is based on a faulty, Platonic understanding of philosophy itself.

Adopting an ancient image, Nussbaum suggests that we ought to think of ourselves as resembling plants—vulnerable, organically connected to our surroundings, finite in time and space—rather than as detached winged intellects capable of soaring above it all. Nussbaum wants us to see that the life of a mortal is superior to that of a god. One is born, one grows, perchance blooms, one withers, then dies. Nussbaum's goal is to portray and affirm the goodness and happiness appropriate to a

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world depopulated of immortal souls, transcendent gods, unchanging ordering principles, essences, Categorical Imperatives, Divine Commandments, and "Nature" as a standard for value. This is a world of "anthropocentric ethics." Firmly rooted in the earth, deprived of Platonic "theory" or contemplation, we are limited in our deliberations about the best life to non-technical, pre-scientific moral reasoning for which there are no a priori rules. The absence of commensurating values means that moral dilemmas, and so tragedies, are unavoidable, even ubiquitous aspects of our everyday moral reasoning.

Professor Nussbaum's project is an ambitious one, and her long book offers detailed discussions of, among other things, plays by Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides; Plato's *Protagoras, Republic, Symposium, Phaedrus;* Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics, De Motu Animalium, Rhetoric, Magna Moralia, Poetics;* the Platonic dialogue form and Aristotle's style of writing. Nussbaum pursues her themes with impressive erudition and insight. She writes well, in a way that successfully conveys her sense of the urgency and importance of the issues at stake. It is a pleasure to read an author who, while in complete control of the necessary scholarship, approaches the history of philosophy motivated by a passion for self-examination rather than for erudition alone. Her emphasis on the question of the relationship between philosophy and literature is commendable and, particularly in the context of Anglo-American philosophy, very much worth insisting on. Her willingness to cite from works by scholars representing many different approaches to Greek thought is also praiseworthy.

The vast sweep, as well as contemporary relevance, of Professor Nussbaum's book is shown by her repeated suggestion that the "Platonic" view of life became (and still is) the dominant one in ethics, thanks especially to Kant. We are told that a fundamental break with the "Anglo-American tradition"—which in our métier is widely, if very loosely, referred to as "analytical philosophy"—is needed. Nussbaum also sees relevant similarities between the Platonic/Kantian and Christian approaches to ethics. Of course these thoughts are by no means novel. Heidegger and Nietzsche argued along similar lines about the history of philosophy (including the positive value of tragedy and poetry, as well as the poverty of philosophy-as-asceticism). In a note Nussbaum writes, "I shall simply assert here my belief that Nietzsche was correct in thinking that a culture grappling with the widespread loss of Judeo-Christian religious faith could gain insight into its own persisting intuitions about value by turning to the Greeks. When we do not try to see them through the lens of Christian beliefs we can not only see them more truly; we can also see how true they are to us. . . ." Thus her appeal for a return to Aristotle is meant to call into question much of our present moral reasoning.

A mark of a good book in philosophy is its ability to recover fundamental questions and to provoke disagreement at a corresponding level. Nussbaum has written a fine book in that sense among others, and my criticisms of her effort arise within the context of my admiration. I shall here focus primarily on her interpretation of Plato. I do so because, first, the remarks on Plato constitute the weakest part of her book; and, second, her interpretation of Plato plays a key role in her argument, and if it is wrong, the conclusions she wishes to draw about the virtues of the Aristotelian alternative (not to mention her account of the history of philosophy) lose much of their force.

Professor Nussbaum argues that the impulse animating Plato's conception of what is valuable in life is the "aspiration to rational self-sufficiency." Platonism is fundamentally fueled by a "practical" need for power and control over both "inner" contingencies (such as the "bodily desires" and the emotions) and "outer" contingencies. Reason is the instrument for the mastery of nature. She interprets Plato as arguing that the good human life is such as long as it is safe from events governed by luck (defined as that which is out of one's own control, whether the events are by chance or caused by some other agency). The Platonic impulse gives rise to various ontological and epistemological doctrines concerning the transcendent Forms, immortal soul, and so forth. At least in the "early" and "middle" dialogues, Plato is (we are made to infer) an almost inhumanly cold devotee of argument—a kind of logic-chopping intellectual machine. He is the sort of man who knows little about life or about love—a "rational stone," in Nuss-

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baum's words. Platonic rationality ignores the value of "openness, receptivity, and wonder." If Aristotle and the tragedians promote the "fragility" of goodness, Plato is made to promote its frigidity. This leads to Plato's ostensible contempt for the poets' portrayals of life as it is really lived, endless dilemmas, moral tragedies, inner tensions, contingencies, fragility, and all.

Unfortunately, Nussbaum's reading of Plato depends very heavily on marred assumptions about how to interpret Plato's dramas. Nussbaum does not hesitate, when it suits her argument, to infer Plato's views from what Plato has one of the characters in his dialogues say. Her entire analysis of Plato's position depends on the legitimacy of those inferences. The inferences are not legitimate here any more than they would be in the case of a reading of, say, Shakespeare. (One cannot without a lot of justification hold that Shakespeare endorsed Macbeth's statement that life "is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing," even though Shakespeare wrote those words.) Nussbaum pays insufficient attention to Platonic anonymity and its crucial consequences, as well as to the dramatic or rhetorical situation of the discourses uttered by Plato's dramatis personae. In sum, Nussbaum does not take the dialogues seriously enough as works of literature. She thus fails to be true to her own thesis about the close proximity of philosophy to literature.

This striking failure is closely connected to her acceptance of the assumption, conventional among Anglo-American classical scholars, that the order in which Plato composed the dialogues is critical to interpreting his philosophy. For once we read Plato's views from the utterances of his dramatis personae, we shall have to explain the changes in his views, and we can do so by charting the dates he wrote each dialogue and then attributing the changes from dialogue to dialogue to Plato's putative mental and emotional development. For Nussbaum, the decisive change in Plato's career occurs in the transition from the early and middle dialogues (including the *Protagoras* and *Symposium*) to the late dialogues (including the *Phaedrus*). She speculates that just before writing the *Phaedrus* the sixty-year-old Plato fell in love with a certain Dion of Syracuse, an experience that caused a

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previously frigid Plato to revise his whole philosophy!

Let me very briefly illustrate where Nussbaum's biographical reading of Plato enters into her remarks about specific dialogues. In the text named after him, the Sophist Protagoras offers a long myth setting out various theories about human nature, knowledge, and value. By way of rebuttal, Socrates secures Protagoras's assent to a premise explicitly attributed to "the many"—the hedonistic view that the good is pleasure—and then argues that on that premise reason is to be understood as calculation, and so only of instrumental value. This argument allows Socrates to force Protagoras to contradict one of his own theses about the relationship between reason and virtue. Nussbaum abstracts Socrates' rebuttal from its context and attributes the reason-as-calculation, as well as the hedonism views, directly to Socrates (her arguments against the contextual reading are very weak). The picture of Socrates as passionless rationalist begins to emerge.

This misinterpretation of Plato's Socrates is further developed in Nussbaum's (occasionally inspired) readings of the *Republic*, *Symposium*, and *Phaedrus*. Just as Karl Popper argued that the *Republic* establishes Plato as an opponent of the "open society" and as a precursor of fascism, so Nussbaum argues that the dialogue shows Plato to be an opponent of what one might call the "open self." Both interpretations ignore the context-specific purposes of Socrates' utterances in the *Republic*, and both identify those utterances with Plato's views. Turning to the *Symposium*, Nussbaum again interprets Socrates and his famous speech about love as exhibiting the hyper-rationalist position. By contrast, the ambitious, mercurial, powerfully desiring Alcibiades exhibits "an integrated response to the person as a unique whole." This surely is not so, as Alcibiades' failure to understand Socrates' love of wisdom indicates. Nussbaum does not sufficiently consider that Socrates' coldness to Alcibiades, which she takes as confirming his asceticism, is actually an appropriate, indeed responsible, response to Alcibiades as the potentially dangerous individual he in fact was. Socrates' seeming denigration in his discourse of the value of the individual might also be seen as the appropriate medicine for the audience Socrates is addressing. Perhaps *Plato* intended the *reader* to formulate a theory of love that combines both standpoints. Nussbaum argues instead that Plato intended to show that the standpoints of Socrates and Alcibiades are incompatible, in the manner of true tragedy. If that is true, however, the *Symposium* would speak against the polarization of dialogue and tragedy that Nussbaum wishes to establish.

Nussbaum goes on to argue that the first two speeches of the *Phaedrus*, which argue for the lowly view that reason is the instrument of bodily satisfaction, actually embody crucial elements of the famous "ladder theory of love" that is described by Socrates in the *Symposium*. Since Socrates' great myth later in the *Phaedrus* explicitly recants the view he supposedly held in the earlier speeches and earlier Platonic dialogues, Nussbaum infers that Plato's philosophy, and thus Plato himself, must have undergone fundamental development at this juncture (described above). This interpretation of the *Phaedrus* obscures the rich unity of the dialogue and the complex relationship between the lowly and edifying discourses that are there presented—for instructive reasons that are evident from the context—by Socrates and Phaedrus.

In keeping with her interpretation of Plato, Professor Nussbaum does not sufficiently consider that Plato's Socrates never tires of praising self-knowledge—knowledge of oneself as this individual—for that is key to leading the best life available to a human being. Plato's dramatic way of writing emphasizes this irreducibly existential burden on each individual. The conversations between individuals in Plato's work are fundamentally dialectical in a non-scientific, non-calculative sense. By contrast, Aristotle's texts (at least those that we possess) seem far more abstract and scientific in their approach to the same human issues. One could argue that his analysis of practical or moral reasoning in the *Nicomachean Ethics* is itself more like an exercise in epistemic knowing than of moral reasoning or practical deliberation, and so the true ancestor of the deficient approach of "Anglo-American philosophy." It can be argued that Aristotle's texts are committed to a level of clarity, coherence, intelligibility, and harmony that is deeply anti-tragic, a fundamental insight of tragedy being the impossibility of "making sense" of life in the ways Aristotle attempts. The lack of stability conveyed by some Greek tragedies seems closer to the fluid and irony-

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laden world of the Platonic dialogues than the calm and perspicuous problem solving of Aristotle's analyses.

Nussbaum declares that her method and basic position are Aristotelian. In her illuminating interpretation of Aristotle, she emphasizes heavily that our access to the truth of things rests on "our most basic beliefs and experiences concerning what is worthwhile." If a moral theory "will save what we most deeply consider worth saving," then the theory is true. As Nussbaum construes Aristotle's method, the standard of nature (which Aristotle certainly does use) seems radically depreciated. "To find out about our nature seems to be one and the same with finding out what we believe to be the most important and indispensable elements of our lives." Nussbaum emphasizes so strongly the primacy of practical reasoning for Aristotle that she has little choice but to argue that Aristotle's own (Platonistic) discussion, in the final book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, on the perfection of soul achieved in theoretical contemplation of God, contradicts the rest of the *Ethics*.

Even if her controversial interpretation of Aristotle's "method of appearances" is accurate, we are left with the vexing problem of deciding which of our deeply held beliefs is true when our beliefs conflict and, in fact, of deciding whether deeply believing something is enough to make it true. Nussbaum discusses, for example, Aristotle's statements to the effect that women are naturally inferior to men, and argues that here Aristotle has failed to follow his own method. I find her argument unpersuasive, given her own interpretation of Aristotle's method. Aristotle and his colleagues no doubt did feel deeply that women are inferior by nature, and that in so doing he was following the judgment of generations of wise persons. We feel deeply that men and women are equal in relevant respects (a view Socrates asserts in the *Republic*). If our access to nature resides only in beliefs and in a "method of appearances," how are we to show that our beliefs are truer than those of Aristotle?

This of course is a Platonic question, a prelude to the dialectical search for the truth of the matter. Nussbaum holds that an Aristotelian cannot answer the question without circularity or in a way that will satisfy the Platonist. I wish that she had taken up in its own terms and in detail this problematic con-

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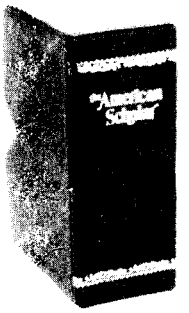
versation between Platonist and Aristotelian, since it might have forced a less well disposed evaluation of Aristotle and a more sympathetic analysis of the Platonic defense of dialogue, a defense exhibited by the very style of Plato's texts. Professor Nussbaum continually appeals to "our" sense of the "richness" of certain experiences (such as that of love) as a reason for rejecting what she takes to be the Platonic devaluation of those experiences. Strictly speaking, there are no theoretical arguments against Plato, or indeed Kant, in Nussbaum's book. For example, there is no argument that Forms do not exist. Rather, we are told that if Forms did exist life would be less rich. Nussbaum aims to show not that Platonism is false but that it is undesirable. This approach is in keeping with her version of Aristotelian method and with her thesis that theoretical doctrines are expressions of practical or moral experiences (the Platonist feels compelled to master contingency, and so forth). But is the "argument from richness" persuasive? In addition to asking what is so good about richness and whether Plato's theory really requires us to abandon it, we need to ask whether or not the argument is itself a theory (at some deep level). For if it is—as I believe it to be—then theory and practice cannot be divorced in the way Nussbaum implies.

If that is so, then we must rethink Martha Nussbaum's thesis that the impulse driving the Platonic ascent to the Forms is a fear of contingency and a desire for mastery through technical reason. That ascent might instead have its source in openness to and wonder at, among other things, the beauty in this world of these particular individuals. The goal of Plato's writings about the ascent may be not to negate life but rather to open our eyes to the transcendence within finitude that makes our lives rich as well as distinctively human. Is not the beauty of the contingent individual saved rather than lost by the theory that there is something of the eternal and divine present in it? Is not that very union of particular and universal—a fragile and perhaps miraculous co-presence—awesome, and provocative of friendship and the love of wisdom simultaneously? Affirmative answers to these questions are perhaps among the most deeply held beliefs human beings possess. If so, an advocate of Professor Nussbaum's Aristotle should enthusiastically pronounce them valuable.



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